

Hi everyone!

So... what to say what to say... ah!

This is my first Harry Potter fanfiction, because normally I write stories with my own characters. I'm on my way to publish my first book and have already an agreement with a publisher.

The little problem is that they have set a deadline for the second book of my planned trilogy so my updates to this fanfiction won't be very regularly. But I will do my best!

I also would like to say that English isn't my first language because I'm from Germany so it could happen that I make some really silly mistakes.

I hope you like my story

Disclaimer: I don't own any characters of the Harry Potter series. Otherwise I probably wouldn't write a fanfiction. They all belong to the wonderful Joanne K. Rowling.

Enjoy!

## Chapter 1

A howling wind blew over the trees and bushes and the roofs ached under the pressure of the coming storm. Nobody was outside, that would be suicide - finally the people shared one opinion - and the shutters of the windows were tightly closed so that no flying object could damage the nicely built houses. The usually extravagant gardens were now decorated with branches and debris of the dusty streets, parks and trees.

The street lights flickered and occasionally one of them would go out entirely and the unusual darkness of the early evening would take over.

This was the state in which Privet Drive in Little Whinging, Surrey, currently could be found.

Inside the house of Number 4 of said street lived three persons – or so it seemed.

In the living room of the house the light was turned on and a radio played some old songs. Everywhere stood pictures. Some of a little pig... ah, boy and then in between some of a little family and strangely deformed people.

The first one was a man. A fat and angry looking man with dirty blond hair, who resembled a walrus more than a human being. He sat grumpily on the sofa of the spotless room, a glass of whiskey in one hand and the daily newspaper in the other. He was the total opposite of the neatly cleaned room. His grey shirt was dirty and his trousers where crumpled.

From time to time he grunted and murmured something into his mustache before his eyes flickered to his wife who sat on a comfortable armchair.

His wife was a tall, thin woman with a long neck on which a head with high cheekbones and dark brown hair sat. She looked surprisingly strong like a horse and had her mouth formed into a grimace that could never, even if one tried hard, be imagined as a loving smile. She wore a horrid red summer dress and pink plush slippers.

She was fussing over a boy that sat on the floor and looked somewhere between fourteen and fifteen years old. Well... if you could call him a boy.

He seemed to be trying to surpass his father and grow more outwards than upwards. He had a sticky mob of blond hair on the top of his round head and was munching chocolate cake and a bag of chips at the same time while staring at the blank TV screen. Even with his clothes he looked exactly like his walrus of a father, except that he bore more resemblance to a pig, proving he was obviously the boy in all those pictures.

"Petunia. Don't you think it is a bit... odd, that this storm is going on at the same time... he comes back from god knows where?" said the fat man with disgust to his wife.

She wrinkled her nose and looked at the ceiling. "After this hot weather these last few days... it could just be a coincidence Vernon dear."

The man, who apparently was called Vernon, snorted. "As if with those... those freaks something could ever be a coincidence!" He drank a bit of his whiskey. "You of all people should know best that those maggots always mean trouble for us normal and civilized people!"

"You are right of course darling." answered Petunia monotonously and patted her fat son on the head.

"And then add to this that they are corrupting our little Duddikins with those freaky sticks of theirs! It's-"

"Wands," interrupted him a deep and strong, but still young voice.

"WHAT?!" Vernon roared and dropped his newspaper on the floor before he turned to the door.

A boy... no, a young man, was standing in the doorway leaning casually against the frame. He had jet-black hair that reached a little past his jaw and stood up in every direction and that gave him a wild and dangerous look. A bright, emerald green shimmer came from the eyes that were partly hidden by some strands of hair, but you could clearly see the piercing look he gave the people in the room. He wore black jeans with a silver belt and a dark green sleeveless shirt that showed off a well toned body. He was not bulky like a bodybuilder, but ripped, and you could imagine that he had a nice six-pack hidden under his well fitting clothes.

He looked at Vernon with a raised eyebrow. "These sticks you were just talking about... they are called wands, you know?"

“HOW DARE YOU TO USE SUCH A... A FOUL AND ABNORMAL WORD IN MY HOUSE?!” screamed Vernon, spitting drops of saliva into his whiskey.

The boy shrugged. “It’s not like any word that has to do with magic, like Hogwarts or Wizard is going to cause an explosion. So what’s got your knickers in a twist?”

“What did you just say boy?” asked Vernon in a low whisper.

“You heard me,” answered the boy, shrugging as he stepped forward, “But what I would like to know is...” he narrowed his bright emerald eyes. “Where my things are. Aunt Petunia, any idea?”

Petunia’s body stiffened and she looked pleadingly at her husband who took a large gulp of his whiskey and seemed oblivious to the words the boy had said.

“Wh-what do you mean?” she asked rudely. “We... we haven’t seen your... your unnatural stuff boy! And you know that!”

“And anyways, where in the heck were you these past four weeks?!” demanded the pig looking boy on the floor. “You didn’t turn up at the station and dad drove there for nothing!”

“That is none of your concern Duddikins.” answered the boy coldly. “I was away. Be happy with it and leave me the hell alone this next week. Some of my friends are picking me up then and you won’t see me until next summer.”

“My name is Dudley!” snarled the boy venomously.

“Sure ike Diddywums. Keep telling yourself that.” answered the boy smirking.

“DAAADD... the freak is insulting me! Punish him!” whined Dudley pathetically.

Vernon's mood instantly brightened and he ignored the snap at his son. "So you will be leaving then? Those freaks are picking you up? And we won't see your freakish face until next summer?"

The boy nodded. "Are you just deaf or has your brain shut off because of overload uncle?" he asked, his voice laced with sarcasm. "That's what I said."

A vein on Vernon's forehead bulged and he answered with gritted teeth. "Fine boy. We will leave you alone. But we will have none of your freakishness in this house! Is that clear?! Now go upstairs to your room!"

The boy made no move to follow the order and folded his arms.

"I said GO!" ordered Vernon loudly.

"Where are my things?" the boy calmly wanted to know again. "My trunk, my broom, and Hedwig's cage?"

"HOW SHOULD WE KNOW WHERE YOU PUT YOUR FILTHY TRASH?!" screamed Vernon.

"I was in the bathroom ten minutes ago." the boy retorted, relaxed. "And when I came back into my room my things were gone. Where are they?"

Vernon's face turned bright red and he looked ready to explode. Petunia stood up and laid a bony hand on her husband's shoulder.

She looked in disgust at the boy. "They are in the cupboard under the stairs."

The boy turned around and walked to the door, but before he reached it he was interrupted.

Dudley snickered. "You should know where it is, don't you?"

He stopped in his tracks and whirled around. Wand ready. "Watch it Duddikins! I may not be allowed to do magic outside of school, but

you forget that I've got a mass murdering godfather at my side who will not hesitate to finish your transformation from my eleventh birthday!"

Dudley 'eeped' and clutched his fat ass with both hands.

Satisfied with the effect of his words, the boy turned around and left the living room before his uncle realized that he threatened his son and his aunt started screeching like a banshee.

This surely would be a long week...

The boy opened the lock on the cupboard and took a large wooden trunk, a shining broom and a big cage out of it before he loudly shut it, climbed up the stairs to the smallest bedroom of Number 4, Privet Drive, and opened the door. His eyes fell on several locks that were fastened there and sighed. He put his trunk down in the middle of his small room and switched the light on. Up here the storm was ten times louder than downstairs in the living room. He clicked the door shut and looked at the small mirror that hung on the wall beside it.

He wrinkled his nose as he stared at his reflection.

Of course, he had changed in the past... four weeks. His face no longer held traces of baby fat and his jaw was no longer round and childish. It was more defined and made him look older.

He had done a good bit of training these last few weeks and you could really see it. Before the holidays he was a scrawny boy with knurled knees and arms like sticks, and now he had well formed muscles and a nice six-pack. And he had grown taller. Much taller. Before, he was 5,5 and the smallest boy of his age. Now he stood a proud 6,2, and he was really happy about it.

A part of it was surely that he had had regular, nutritious meals after the school term. Normally after he came home he would live on the leftovers his so called relatives left for him. If they left something. He also no longer wore his glasses. He had his vision fixed two weeks ago, realizing that his glasses were just in the way.

He idly wondered what his friends were going to say when they saw him next week and grinned mischievously. But his face darkened when his eyes fell on his forehead. Under some loose strands of hair over his right brow was a scar. A scar in the shape of a lightning-bolt. This scar made him famous to the whole hidden world of the wizards and witches. Everybody knew his name and children were told about his life in a bedtime story. This scar marked him as 'The-Boy-Who-Lived'.

He chuckled dryly, not at all amused. Last year he had often been the tragic hero of the Daily Prophet: 'The-Boy-Who-Seeks-Attention-And-Is-Nuts'. The crazy and unstable savior of the Wizarding World: Harry James Potter. His scar was a symbol for the defeat of the cruelest Dark Lord after Grindelwald. A symbol for the defeat of Lord Voldemort.

But for him... for him it was always just a reminder of what he had lost.

Voldemort came at Halloween fourteen years ago to his parents' house and killed James Potter and Lily Evans-Potter. He knew exactly how it had happened. First his father was killed. He had tried to stop Voldemort in the hopes that his wife could rescue herself and Harry. James had fought till his last breath, but it hadn't done anything to the Dark Lord.

Then there was his mother... Voldemort had wanted her to stand aside so that he could kill Harry, but she had begged Voldemort to let him live and sacrificed herself instead. Then Harry had been alone, but Voldemort wasn't able to kill him. His curse, one of the so called Unforgivables – the Avada Kedavra – backfired, and he lost his own body in the process.

Oh, the irony...

And he had finally come back after the final task of the famous Triwizard-Tournament that was held at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry last year. Harry, of course, was falsely entered by a faithful Death Eater named Bartemius Crouch Jr. that had taken the

post of Defence Against The Dark Arts teacher disguised as Alastor 'Mad-Eye' Moody.

Voldemort had gained a new body with the help of a traitor, a slimy rat named Wormtail, aka. Peter Petigrew. Because of this rat his godfather Sirius Black was on the run. Harry could have lived a happy childhood with him if it weren't for this traitor. And now he had to endure the torture that his only living relatives – the Dursleys – put him through every day.

He turned away from the mirror and suddenly something knocked loud and steady on the window. His eyes widened as he saw that his beautiful snowy owl Hedwig stood with ruffled feathers on the window sill.

As fast as he could, he opened the window and a strong gust of wind blew into his face. Hedwig flew into his room and he immediately shut the window. He didn't want to take a flying lesson indoors after all.

"Hey girl." he greeted her softly when she perched on her cage. "Any letters?"

Hedwig hooted and nodded her head before she let four letters drop onto the floor.

Harry smiled and stroked her feathers. "I'm sorry, but I haven't got any owl threats at the moment..."

Hedwig seemed to shrug and hid her head under her left wing, a sign that she needed her well earned rest. Without wasting any time, Harry sat down on his bed and opened the first letter. He frowned, but then a smile formed on his face.

Harry,

I hope you arrived at your relatives safely. I've got no clue how you can stand those muggles. With everything you told me they must be really horrible!



It was good that we had enough 'time' in those four weeks, don't you think? I think mother's pocket watch paid off quite nicely. Father doesn't suspect anything, he isn't much at home anyway. He still believes mother and I are on holiday here at the manor in France. Since the finals, he is always out fulfilling orders of our favorite Nutter. I couldn't find out much about him though. He just seems to have disappeared from the face of earth. All I know is that he is looking for more Morons and father keeps talking about something in the Ministry.

Anyway... I really hope you are well and don't do anything stupid to get yourself into trouble. That damn Griffindor bravery will someday get you killed! I don't know what will happen with me when my mother finds out. She seems to have taken a liking to you and took you under her wing. So it's good that you are part Slytherin too. (Even if I'm not entirely sure how much)

Don't overdo it.

Oh, mother and Beautiful send their regards.

Harry folded the letter after he read it a second time. There was no name under it but he knew who it was from. Why wouldn't he? He had been training and living with him for the last four weeks. He shook his head and took another letter and was immediately annoyed with this one. It was from Hermione Jean Granger. His best female friend.

Dear Harry,

I hope you aren't in trouble and please don't blame yourself for what happened at the tournament. It wasn't your fault. You didn't respond to my last letter so I take it that you are busy with homework.

Harry snorted. He had finished his homework on the first three days of the holiday, and blaming himself had never been an option for him. Of course he had felt slightly guilty after Cedric's death but drowning in self-pity? No thanks. He had just been angry, because in her last letter he could see that she and Ron were together somewhere, probably at the Burrow. And he was technically sitting here in Surrey

all that time in the hope of some new information regarding Voldemort. But no... he continued reading.

And please don't ask about You-Know-Who. Dumbledore forbade me to say anything. He says it's not safe and he is right I think. I wanted to tell you at least something... but how could I with him watching my back all the time? Seriously, he can be really paranoid at times. Much worse than Moody. You remember? 'Constant Vigilance!' Even if he was just a fake professor. I miss you and look forward to next week when they pick you up.

With love

Hermione

Even if he had been angry before, he still smiled and took the next letter. This one was from Ronald Billius Weasley. His best friend since the first train ride to Hogwarts.

Hey mate!

How are you? Don't think too much about Cedric's death. It's not good for you. Dude, Hermione is really getting on my nerves! When they told us three days ago that you would come next week she totally lost it! I mean... I'm happy that you are coming as well, but I don't start jumping around in the house singing! I swear she has gone nuts! Well... I've not got much to say. But we'll see each other next week anyway.

Take care mate and don't let your relatives get to you!

Ron

Harry chuckled at the picture of Hermione jumping around and singing and folded the letter before he took the last one.

Hiya Pup!

I hope you are well! Have you caused some mischief to your relatives? If not, I hereby swear I'm royally gonna kick you into next

week! And don't worry; I'm safe and well hidden. Our friend Wolfie with his 'furry little problem' is here too and sends his greetings.

I really feel ashamed that I wasn't able to write more often, but I'm very busy at the moment with a so called 'Chicken-Club' and some Death Munchers. What have you been up to since I last saw you? I really look forward to next week!

See ya pup!

Snuffles

Harry's face split into a wide grin as he read the letter and had broken out into full blown laughter at what Sirius called the Death Eaters. Even if he hadn't a clue what they had to do with chickens. This was just typical for his godfather. After all, he hadn't been a prankster in school for nothing.

He chuckled a while and then leaned back on his bed, the storm ringing loudly in his ears and the aching of the woods clearly audible to him.

Now he just had to endure one week and then he would be out of here again. He smirked, a habit he had picked up over time, and closed his eyes. A piece of cake!

Well that was the first chapter of the story, I hope you liked it. I really have to get into the story myself at first and it probably is going to be better.

Don't forget: Read and Review!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 2

Harry awoke with a start when a loud banging was heard on his door. He groggily sat up and shook his head when he heard his uncle from the other side of the door.

“BOY! We are visiting Aunt Marge for the next week. When we get back I don’t want to see my house crumbled to dusk and have to wait until you are gone with your freakish friends! IS THAT CLEAR?”

“Yes uncle Vernon.” replied Harry who opened the door slowly after he had opened his window first to let in some fresh air.

“Good.”, breathed his uncle who threw him a disgusted look. “Don’t you dare eat all our food either. By your looks you have enough money to buy your own meals.”

“Yeah...,” said Harry and squeezed himself into the hall that was entirely filled by his uncle’s massive weight, to reach the bathroom. “See ya then. And don’t worry. I’ve got better things to do than stay in the house all day. And I’ll be just as happy as you to be outta here by then.”

Vernon grunted and pounded down the stairs. Harry didn’t bother to watch as the Dursleys took their leave and took his morning shower before dressing into comfortable grayish-blue jeans that looked fashionable worn. He took a while to select his shirt and finally settled on a silky black shirt that had a majestic silvery dragon wrapped around his torso. Not just any dragon, but a Hungarian Horntail, the very same dragon he had fought against in the Triwizard Tournament.

Satisfied with his looks he left the bathroom and took a long dark green cloak with silver fastenings out of his trunk. Why shouldn’t he use his now free time and go out? He took a piece of parchment and a quill out of his trunk and wrote a quick note.

It’s safe, the muggles have left. Meet me at the Leaky Cauldron at 11 am. Bring Beautiful with you.

H.

He woke Hedwig who hooted softly and he held the letter out to her.

“You know where he is. You’ve got three hours to deliver the letter to him. Shouldn’t be a problem, should it?”

The owl hooted again and nibbled his finger affectionately before she took off with the letter and flew through the already opened window.

He took his coin sack and put his wand into the new invisible holster he wore on his right arm and went down into the kitchen for breakfast. It was 9.30 at the moment so he had plenty of time. At 10.00 he threw the dirty dishes into the sink and draped his cloak over his arm. Now it was his turn to leave Privet Drive.

He looked around the street and raised his eyebrows. Dust and dirt that was thrown around by the storm lay everywhere. No one seemed to bother to clean the street.

When he walked along the street to Magnolia Ring, he couldn’t shake the feeling that somebody was watching him. He looked nonchalantly over his shoulder and tried to hear something. When he concentrated hard enough he was able to hear shuffling steps not far behind. But nobody was there...

He stopped in his tracks and turned into a small alley. He caught the scent of strong alcohol and wrinkled his nose before sneezing. He kneeled down and it looked like he was tying his left shoelace. When he heard footsteps not far behind him, he whirled around and his hand caught something solid where there only seemed to be thin air. He pulled and suddenly held a shining invisibly cloak in his hands. He narrowed his eyes and looked at the person who stood in front of him.

“Who are you?” he snarled dangerously, aiming his wand straight at the persons head.

“Hey, would ya jus’ relax fella? That thin’ ya got there is dangerous ya know.”

Harry's eyes narrowed further as he looked at the man in front of him. He was wearing a torn and dirty cloak and had a greasy hat on his brown-haired head. His clothes weren't in any better shape either. They were just as dirty and torn as his cloak.

"Who are you?" Harry asked again.

"The name's Mundungus Fletcher. Call me Dung if ya wanna. Don't ya worry 'cause of lil' ol' me. Jus' pretend ya didn't see me, kay?" answered the slurring man.

"Okay Dung...", said Harry, not really sure if the man was dangerous or not. "Why were you following me around with this invisibly cloak?"

"It was my job!" answered Mundungus as he scratched his ear.

"Your job?" Harry asked skeptically and Mundungus nodded his head.

"Yeah. Ol' Dumbles ordered it. Today's my shift... but I wasn't s'posed to be seen. Had orders to stay hidden."

"So Dumbledore told you to shadow me?" Harry wanted to know, slightly worried and angry at the same time. "How long has this been going on?"

Mundungus was silent for a moment. "Jus' since yesterday I think. Cause Death Eaters are on tha move ya know."

"Not very good at hiding, are you? What would happen if Dumbledore found out that I talked with you?"

Mundungus shrugged but seemed uncomfortable. "Don' know. He'll be angry I s'pose."

"Well then, I tell him." said Harry and moved his wand back into his holster. "It's better for you if you don't sneak around here. You suck at stealth."

“NO!” Mundungus screamed panicky. “I don’ wanna get the shit beaten outta me by that mad godfather of yours boy! An’ the rest of the Order!”

“You know Sirius?”

Harry was surprised and suddenly an idea struck him.

“Alright. I won’t tell anybody that I saw you if you take me to the Leaky Cauldron. But swear you won’t tell a soul. Deal?”

He held out his hand and waited for just a second until Mundungus slapped it.

“Deal. I owe ya one Harry. I’m gonna bring ya to the Cauldron don’t ya worry ‘bout that. Grab my shoulder.”

Harry did as Mundungus told him and suddenly he had the feeling his whole body was squeezed through a small tube and he had trouble breathing. Normally he didn’t have any problem with Apparition. Then, as quick as it came it was gone, and he stood in front of the small brick wall that hid the entrance to Diagon Alley. He turned around to Mundungus and handed him the invisibly cloak.

“How long is your shift?” he wanted to know.

“Everyday till Monday when you’re gonna be picked up by the Order. Jus’ at night somebody else is there.”

“Well then thank you for the ride, and remember, I’m still in the house at Privet Drive and didn’t leave the whole day.”

“Gotcha,” Mundungus nodded, and with a loud ‘crack’ vanished on the spot.

Harry smirked. He had thought he would have to break into Mrs. Figg’s house to use the floo network, but this was ten times better. He chuckled when he thought back to when he first realized that his babysitter, the cat crazed Mrs. Figg, had to be a witch or at least a

squib. He looked at his new silver watch and saw that he still had enough time to drink something at the pub first.

He slipped his cloak over his clothes and went into the pub where Tom the bartender stood before him and bowed slightly.

“Good day Mr. Potter. It’s nice to see you again.”

Harry nodded. “It’s nice to see you as well Tom. I’ll take the usual seat in the corner.”

“I take it that your friends will be joining you soon?”

Harry just nodded and Tom lead him to a table in the corner where you could see the whole pub, but weren’t easily seen yourself.

“Can I bring you something to eat?” Tom asked when Harry was seated.

“No, thank you.” replied Harry. “But you can bring two butterbeers and a glass of Ogden’s Best for now.”

Tom nodded and left.

Harry meanwhile took out a small mirror and concentrated on his famous scar. It took a moment but soon it wasn’t visible anymore. There was now just plain, dark, healthy tanned skin. Well, it was damn useful when you have some traits of a Metamorphmagus. Satisfied, he thanked Tom as he brought his order and leaned back on his chair while he sipped his cold butterbeer.

He still had twenty minutes to spare and looked around the pub. It was, as always, lively and the fireplace often flashed green when more and more people arrived via floo powder. He nearly choked when he saw Severus Snape, his potions professor, step out of the fireplace. He wore his standard black billowing cloak and had his trademark sneer in place. He scanned the pub and his eyes met Harry’s, who coldly stared back, for the breath of a second. He raised his eyebrows before he left the pub in the direction of the alley.



Harry breathed a sigh of relief and put his butterbeer down on the table before he folded his arms and closed his eyes to relax and concentrate on any threats that might be near. Not even ten minutes had passed when he was interrupted.

“Pff... you travel hundreds of miles to meet him and he’s sleeping,” a familiar and sarcastic voice said.

“Oui. And ‘e iz already drinking in ze morning,” a melodic girl’s voice with a strong French accent chuckled.

“Shut it you two and sit down.” said Harry, smirking as he cracked his eyes open.

The two people in front of him smirked back and sat down before they lowered the hoods that covered their faces. The girl was actually a young woman. But she was the most beautiful woman that Harry had ever seen and had long silvery blond hair that reached down to her waist. She had high cheekbones and glittering blue eyes. She wore a casual white top and black jeans under her dark red cloak. She had a perfect body and was tall. About 5.8 in normal shoes.

The other one was a young man who looked his age, with platinum blonde hair that was styled perfectly. He had piercing grey eyes and very aristocratic features. He, just like Harry, had well built muscles that were hidden under a dark green dress shirt, black jeans, and a black cloak. He also was very tall maybe 6.1 or 6.2, with long legs.

“I didn’t think we would meet until the new term started.” said the young man who grabbed the other butterbeer while the young woman sat down gracefully and took a sip of the Ogden’s Best that Harry had ordered.

“Well Draco...,” answered Harry still smirking. “The Dursleys left for my uncle’s walrus of a sister. You know the one I blew up before third year?”

The young man that was known as Harry Potter’s arch enemy, the one and only Draco Lucius Malfoy, snorted. “Yeah. You told me the

story after Granger had beaten the shit out of me before the execution of that hippogriff.”

“You always insult her. I think you deserved it for what you did to Hagrid.” answered Harry shrugging.

“Zat ‘e ‘as,” said the young woman smiling as Draco pouted.

“So... after Fleur threw her galleon at me too... can we get started?” asked Draco after a while.

“Of course.” said Harry and turned serious.

He looked at the young woman, Fleur Delacour, one of the four champions of the Triwizard Tournament. “You were right about what you said before I left. They don’t tell me anything, but today I caught some drunken guy shadowing me in an invisibly cloak. He claimed to work for Dumbledore and said something about some Order. Do you two know anything about it?”

Fleur shook her head but Draco seemed deep in thought. “An Order... I think father said something about that when he came back after a raid... I think it was something with birds...”

He looked up startled as Harry snapped his fingers.

“Of course! Sirius wrote me a letter and mentioned a ‘Chicken-Club’. But I doubt that that is the real name,” he said snickering.

“I don’t think so either,” said Draco, amused, and suddenly his eyes widened. “That`s it! It was called the Order of the Phoenix!”

“Order of ze Phoenix?” asked Fleur clueless. “I’ve never ‘eard of somezing like zat.”

“Neither have I,” said Harry. “But I guess that’s the right name for it. Think about it, Dumbledore is the only one I know who has a Phoenix as his familiar. With him as the leader it seems fitting.”

Draco murmured something and took a gulp of his butterbeer.

"What about you Draco? I know that you couldn't tell me everything in the letter. Did you find out anything useful?"

Draco shook his head. "No, what I wrote in the letter was really everything I could get regarding the Nutter... father is currently recruiting new members. And like I wrote he keeps talking about something in the Ministry."

They sat in silence and suddenly Harry began to chuckle, which earned him curious looks from his two companions.

"What are you laughing about?" asked Draco after a short moment.

"I just imagined Ron's and Hermione's faces when they discover that I spent the 'first four weeks' of the holiday with you and Fleur."

"Pray that they don't find out about the real time we three were training. Not just that mutt of my cousin would kill you, but probably my mother as well."

"Because of her pocket watch?" grinned Harry.

"But it was very useful." said Fleur nodding.

Harry sighed quietly. "But how are we going to keep it a secret? I don't really want to lie to my friends all the time. And I don't want to continue with this childish insulting of each other in the corridors."

"Yeah... I don't want to do that either. It's just embarrassing because you always get away with everything anyway."

"Gee, thanks." replied Harry sarcastically.

"Your only problem will be your potions Professor. Severus Snape was 'es name?" asked Fleur and looked over her shoulder.

Draco slapped his face. "Ah... Uncle Sev will probably find out before the first week of school is over. If we're lucky."

Harry said nothing and decided to change the topic. "So Fleur, have you arranged to stay in England now?"

She nodded. "Oui. I got a great job at Gringotts. I vill 'elp Bill Weasley who stays in office for now."

"That's brilliant!" smiled Harry happily as Draco groaned.

Over the last weeks, Fleur had become something of a big sister to him, just as Draco had surprisingly become like a brother.

"Where doesn't a Weasley work?" asked Draco exasperated. "First we are nearly roasted by a dragon because of the redhead in Romania, one is helping us block my father's and the Lestranges' accounts, and two of them are working in the Ministry... granted one is just an arrogant suck up, but still..."

Harry just chuckled and looked at his watch. "Well, who wants to go shopping? Today everything is on me."

"Vhy?" asked Fleur surprised but with a gleam in her eyes.

"Because it's my birthday. So I'm supposed to care for my guest's welfare."

"O 'Arry!", said Fleur, jumping to her feet and enveloping him in a big hug. "Vhy didn't you tell us right away? 'Appy Birthday!"

"Yeah. Happy Birthday Harry," said Draco after Fleur had released him, and patted him hard on the back. "Even if we already celebrated one of your birthdays this year."

"Thanks guys."

Fleur nervously shifted from one foot to another. "So... shopping you zaid?"

Harry laughed and the three paid for their drinks and left the pub. Draco tapped the brick wall with his wand and the passage to Diagon Alley opened.

"Ladies first." said Harry and playfully bowed to Fleur.

"Zank you Monsieur."

Two hours later Harry regretted having taken Fleur on the shopping trip. He wasn't as bad off as Draco, because he had to drag the bags around the Alley. But still... his vault now had a huge dent in it and he was sure he never had spent so much money in this short amount of time. Not even when he had bought himself a whole new wardrobe last week.

"We should go to the Apothecary." said Draco from behind the bags. "We need our potions ingredients, and while we are still here we can buy them now rather than later."

"Do you know which ingredients we will need?" asked Harry and looked around to see if somebody was watching them.

He saw no one and flicked his wand. The bags in Draco's arms began to shrink and in the end he could put them into his pocket.

Draco sighed in satisfaction and nodded. "I know what we need. I got my letter two days ago, after you left."

"Well, lead the way then."

"Oh 'Arry I'm sorry, but I 'ave to go to Gringotts," said Fleur when she appeared in front of them, scaring the hell out of them. "The goblins vant to talk to moi in private."

"That's okay." smiled Harry. "I hope I see you again before the term starts." He gave her a quick hug. "Take care Beautiful, and don't hesitate to contact me if something happens."

Fleur nodded and Draco hugged her quickly and gave her the bags from his pocket. Seconds later she was out of sight.

Harry and Draco slowly walked to the Apothecary and talked about Quidditch on the way.

They stopped in front of the shop and started to enter when the door suddenly opened and a familiar figure stepped out.

“Oh... shit!” Draco accurately voiced Harry’s thoughts.

“Well. Good afternoon Draco.” said Severus Snape, and the sneer he usually wore lightened a bit. Harry also realized that his hair wasn’t as greasy as usual, but looked rather smooth and shiny at the moment. “Who is your friend?”

Harry stiffened and Draco started to stutter. “Well... you see, this is... this is... ah...damn...”

Snape looked at Draco strangely before he scanned Harry from head to toe. Suddenly his eyes widened comically as he looked into Harry’s eyes. “Mr. Potter? Could it be? What are you of all people doing here in Diagon Alley together with Mr. Malfoy?”

Harry sheepishly rubbed the back of his head and ruffled his hair in the process. “Uh... shopping for my birthday, Sir?”

“Alone?” asked Snape with narrowed eyes.

“Yes, Sir.” answered Harry truthfully. “My relatives aren’t at home until next week. They are staying at my uncle’s sister Marge.”

“I see...,” murmured Snape. “That good for nothing thief Fletcher really is an idiot... so he left his post at your house I assume?”

Harry shrugged and Snape glared slightly as he took in his new appearance.

“It’s rather... surprising to see you two together here without firing curses at each other. You two rather seem to be good friends.” sneered Snape to Harry.

Harry shook his head and bowed slightly. “Sorry, Sir. I know that I shouldn’t be out on my own. Especially when he is on the move again. But with all due respect Professor. Times change and so do people.

Draco and I simply agreed to stop our childish feud and became friends instead.”

Snape stared at him slightly open mouthed but quickly composed himself. “I see... but when did this happen?”

Harry shot a quick glance at Draco who looked around and answered for Harry: “After the finals of the Tournament. You know... I never wanted to be a Death Eater like my father, so I approached Harry. We were together for the first few weeks of the holiday.”

Now Snape was totally baffled and took a look at the busy street. He leaned in towards them and said quietly. “Follow me!”

Harry sighed and he and Draco followed the Professor. He led them into a small alley and stopped in front of a small house. He flicked his wand at the door and then led them into a seemingly comfortable but small house.

“Sit down.” ordered Snape and locked the door with various wars, curses and jinxes. “This is a house of mine so nobody will overhear us.”

With another swish of his wand, three tea cups appeared on the small desk near the fireplace. Harry and Draco looked at each other and each sat down on one of the soft armchairs.

“So Draco... what did you mean you were together for most of the holiday? I was informed that Mr. Potter hadn’t left his relative’s house since the start of the holiday and you were in France with Narcissa.”

“I was in France.” said Draco and sipped from his teacup after Snape had filled it. “And normally I still would be. Harry and I just met up today at the Leaky Caldron.”

“Might I inquire how this is possible?” Snape wanted to know.

“Professor, I want to be honest.” said Harry who realized that he too could trust the Professor as Draco did, even if he was a greasy-

haired git. "I never went to my relative's house after the train arrived at King's Cross. I just went there yesterday."

"I assume you were with Draco then Mr. Potter?" Snape asked slowly.

"Yes, Sir." answered Harry truthfully. "I was at the Manor with him and Mrs. Malfoy."

"Narcissa knows?" asked Snape in surprise and looked at Draco.

He nodded. "Of course she knows! I think you already guessed that she isn't really pleased with father's and the Nutter's actions. She was more than willing to help Harry and me."

"This is really quite surprising." said Snape slowly. "By the looks of you two, you didn't just sit around lazily and do nothing."

He looked pointedly at Harry then, and he knew why. He wasn't the scrawny little boy anymore, but looked well trained and healthy. The biggest difference was probably that his glasses were missing and he wore clothes that actually fit.

"No. We trained together with a third person and mother instructed us in everything she was able to."

"Who might this third person be?" asked Snape next.

Harry sighed. "Fleur Delacour, Sir."

The Professor raised his eyebrows. "The Triwizard Champion of Beauxbatons? The girl who is half Veela?"

"Exactly," answered Harry, nodding as he drank a little bit of tea. "She heard us when Draco and I were talking after the disaster at the finals and asked to join us. She is one of the few people who believe that Voldemort really has returned."

"Interesting..." whispered Snape. "What I would like to know Draco is... forgive me Mr. Potter, but how were you able to train and no longer look like an underfed puppy in merely four weeks?"



Draco and Harry looked at each other. Both had the same thought. They had already told Snape most of their story so it wouldn't make a difference if they also told him the rest.

"Mother's pocket watch came in handy." retorted Draco chuckling.

Snape looked at him curiously but then his eyes widened and he gasped. "You... you used Narcissa's time turner?!"

The two teenagers just nodded.

"How many times did you use it?" asked Snape immediately.

"All together we trained for nearly one year." said Harry casually.

Snape stared at him. "Are you serious?"

Harry shook his head, smirking. "No, that's my godfather, Sir. I'm Harry."

Draco snorted and Snape rolled his eyes.

"You know Uncle Sev," said Draco and Snape glared at him. "Harry has a very Slytherin side. It's scary sometimes."

"Has he now?" asked Snape in a sarcastic manner.

Harry smirked and Snape blinked when he saw it. "You can believe your godson Professor or you can find out for yourself."

Snape sneered. "Very well. I think I will wait till the re-sorting in September then."

Draco choked on his tea. "W-what?! A re-sorting?"

"Some staff members voiced their concerns about members of their respective houses. So this year every student will be re-sorted."

“That’s just great!” groaned Harry and sunk into his chair. “I don’t think I will be able to convince the hat to put me into Gryffindor again.”

“Pardon?” asked Snape, perplexed.

“Harry told me that the sorting hat wanted to put him into Slytherin in his first year but he didn’t want to.” answered Draco for him.

Snape was quiet now and looked Harry straight in the eye before he sighed and rubbed his forehead; looking at Harry he raised his eyebrows.

“Where is your scar Mr. Potter?”

Harry touched his forehead and grinned when the scar appeared again. “Time turner, remember? Firstly I discovered that I’m part Metamorphmagus. And technically I’m an adult in the Wizarding World now. Officially I still have to wait until I’m registered as sixteen next year but with the extra year training the trace on my wand disappeared today. I already tried it. It’s good that the underage magic no longer goes until you are seventeen.”

Snape nodded and stood up. Harry and Draco did the same.

“Very well. This was a very enlightening conversation.”

Harry looked at him when he unlocked the door. “You won’t tell Dumbledore and the Order, will you?”

Snape stopped in his tracks and whirled around to face him. “What did you just say?”

“I wanted to know if you will tell Dumbledore and the Order of the Phoenix.”

“How do you know about the Order?” asked Snape in a low whisper.

“I had a rather... interesting meeting with some drunken guy called Mundungus Fletcher. He shadowed me with an invisibly cloak, but he

really sucks at stealth. I discovered him and he told me about Dumbledore's orders and the 'Chicken-Club' what Sirius called the Order in his letter."

"That mangy mutt doesn't know when to shut up!" sneered Snape with disgust.

"Well Uncle Sev. I hope you have a nice afternoon. We've got to be going." said Draco nervously.

"Yes Draco. I shall no longer take up your time. Have a nice day." He nodded briskly to Harry who nodded back in the same manner. "Mr. Potter."

"Have a good day Professor."

Snape opened the door and the two teenagers left the small house. When they reached Diagon Alley again Harry had to chuckle when he saw Draco's face.

"Merlin's Beard! This was so clear from the beginning!" Draco hissed angrily. "I said that he wouldn't find out the first week if we were lucky, but now he knows before the term even starts!"

"I don't really know if he works for Dumbledore or Voldemort..." sighed Harry. "My jab with the Order was just to know if Dumbledore really trusts him. Do you think he will get you in trouble with your father?"

Draco stared at him and then chuckled softly. "No, definitely not. He seems to be a bad guy but he is on the side of the Light through and through, that much I can tell you."

Harry nodded. There were just too many things that he didn't understand about his potions Professor. He hadn't ever done anything to him and Snape kept picking on him.

"I think we should call it a day." said Harry after a while when they had realized that they had passed the Apothecary for the third time and still hadn't bought their ingredients. "This Fletcher guy said that at

night someone else is watching the house and it's nearly six. I don't want to take any chances."

"You're right," answered Draco and they turned around and went back to the Leaky Cauldron. "How will you get home anyway?"

"I think I have to risk it and go by floo powder. Maybe Mrs. Figg isn't at home. In case of an emergency I can still obliviate her."

"Yeah," mused Draco as he took some floo powder. "I'll see you then in Diagon Alley before school or when the term starts. Take care."

Harry nodded and patted him on the back. "You too."

He nodded and threw the powder into the fire. He stepped into the flames and whispered softly. "France Manor!"

When the fire died down and Draco had disappeared, Harry realized that he was hungry and stopped. Why shouldn't he eat here? It would be better than anything out of the fridge. He turned around and looked for an empty seat. He saw one near the entrance and sat down. Immediately Tom came shuffling in his direction and grinned.

"Mr. Potter. What can I do for you?"

"I would like to know what you've got today for dinner."

Tom nodded. "Today we've got roast potatoes with lamb and our homemade mint sauce."

Harry liked his lips. "Delicious! And please bring me a glass of Elderflower wine as well."

"Right away!"

Harry put his hand in his pocket and took out one of the shrunken bags. Not just Fleur had done some shopping today. He took out his new book entitled The Dark Arts, Defense and Offence. It wasn't really a book that he normally should be reading, but he wanted to know as much as possible about the Dark Arts. Voldemort was after

him for Merlin's sake, so he had a very good reason for reading such books.

The pub was relatively silent because the shops in Diagon Alley were closed now and all the families had gone home. He quickly looked around and then went back to his book. After five minutes of reading he was so engrossed in the first chapter that he didn't realize that Tom had brought his food until he nearly squashed the potatoes with his elbow.

He marked his current page, laid the book next to his glass of wine and started to eat. And like always it was delicious. He took his time and looked around at the door from time to time. He had learned to be always aware of his surroundings. When he looked at the entrance that led into the muggle world he nearly choked on his last bite when a huge black dog entered the pub followed by a tall man with short grayish-brown hair and amber colored eyes wearing a shabby looking cloak. Harry quietly cursed his bad luck. Of all the times Remus Lupin and his godfather had to be here... why now?

He watched out of the corner of his eye as the black dog sniffed around in the pub just as Lupin looked around with narrowed eyes. Harry cursed again and stood up.

He quickly took his book and his wine, went to the bar and whispered to Tom: "I'll just go into the back room if that's okay."

"Very well Mr. Potter," said Tom quietly.

Harry threw a last look at his late father's best friends and saw that the dog looked in his direction and so did Lupin. He cursed again and went through the door behind the bar.

"Damn!" he said and kicked the armchair before he sat down heavily. "What's wrong today for Merlin's sake?! Everywhere I go people I know are running around!"

He hadn't been sitting long when he heard the door creak open. He sat with his back towards it and put his head into his hands...

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Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 3

Harry sat in the backroom of the Leaky Caldron and sighed as he heard a pair of footsteps on the wooden floor and some clicking of claws. When he looked up Remus Lupin stood in front of him and looked at him with narrowed eyes. The dog tilted his head and sniffed at his robes before he barked loudly.

"Close the door will you?" sighed Harry and Lupin flicked his wand and muttered several spells and jinxes.

In an instant the black dog changed into a human shape. Suddenly Sirius Black stood in front of him and looked him up and down. Harry looked at his godfather and saw that he was much better looking than when he last had seen him. He now had short black hair and looked a lot more like he did in his parents' wedding picture. He had gained back his aristocratic and haughty Black good looks that everyone in his family had. All traces of his years in Azkaban had nearly disappeared and he looked healthy and well fed.

"Merlin's Beard! Harry James Potter what are you doing here?!" Lupin demanded to know while his godfather grinned happily.

"I might as well be hanged for a dragon as an egg....," said Harry quietly sighing and stood up to look at them better.

Sirius' and Lupin's eyes widened when they saw that he was now as tall as them and had gained muscle and weight.

"Gulping gargoyles! You've grown kiddo!" said Sirius in astonishment as he gave him a rough and manly hug. "If my nose wasn't as good as it is I probably wouldn't have recognized you!"

"Yeah....," said Lupin and took in his new appearance.

"You're gonna be a real heart throb this year!" joked Sirius and patted him on the back. "The ladies will worship the ground you walk on!"

"Thanks," said Harry, smiling slightly. "You look better as well."

Sirius grinned happily and Lupin threw himself exasperated into a free chair. "Harry what the hell are you doing here? We all thought you are at your relatives' house. Dung said you didn't leave the whole day!"

"You mean Fletcher?" asked Harry and Lupin nodded surprised. "He so totally sucks in shadowing people! When I discovered him he was nearly catatonic with the thought that he would be punished for it, so I made a deal with him."

"A deal?" asked Sirius curiously with raised eyebrows.

Harry nodded. "Yeah. I told him that if he took me to Diagon Alley, I wouldn't tell a soul that I know you people are shadowing me."

"Good one kiddo!" laughed Sirius, but Remus shook his head and looked at him seriously.

"You shouldn't be wandering around in Diagon Alley on your own with Voldemort around. It's dangerous! I don't understand why you left your relative's house. There you are as safe as you would be at Hogwarts! I mean, how could you even consider going out on your own? It would be okay in the muggle world but-"

"Hold your hippogriffs!" said Harry and held his hands up. "Should I be scared that old Voldy is lurking behind a dustbin or a corner and throws an Avada Kedavra at me when I pass by, or what?"

Sirius broke into barking laughter at the image and even Lupin chuckled a bit.

"But seriously, we are serious here," said his godfather after a while and Harry raised his eyebrows. "Why are you even here? And what in the name of Merlin's blue boxers did you eat the past four weeks?"

Harry shrugged. "I was shopping for my birthday."

Sirius and Lupin nearly had a heart attack and shouted in unison: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY!"



"Damn, today is the 31st of July... I nearly forgot with all the things going on...", said Sirius, ashamed as Lupin nodded.

"Is the 'Chicken-Club' so much trouble?" Harry wanted to know, smirking. "Or has Dumbledore got you on your toes information gathering?"

Lupin looked at him oddly. "So you know?"

Harry threw a quick glance at his godfather and nodded. "It wasn't hard to figure out that Sirius meant the Order of the Phoenix when he referred to the 'Chicken-Club'. But really. You are the second one who asked me today why I am here."

"Who else asked you?" Sirius wanted to know quickly.

"I had a short meeting with the greasy-haired git that calls himself my potions professor not too long ago. He was determined to find out why I was here and had a nice chat with me."

Lupin snorted and Sirius frowned a bit before he grinned again.

"But what should we do now? Didn't your relatives ask where you were going?"

Now it was time for Harry to snort. "My relatives aren't even at home for the next seven days! They left to visit uncle Vernon's sister."

Lupin and Sirius looked at each other with a gleam in their eyes and reminded Harry, not surprisingly, of the twins.

"Is Mr. Moony thinking what Mr. Padfoot is?"

"Mr. Moony thinks so Mr. Padfoot. What does Mr. Padfoot say?"

"Mr. Padfoot thinks it is a brilliant idea Mr. Moony!"

"So it shall be then Mr. Padfoot."

"Mr. Padfoot is really excited at the thought!"

"So is Mr. Moony."

"May Mr. Outsider inquire what Mssers. Moony and Padfoot are talking about?" interrupted Harry loudly. "Mr. Outsider is quite confused at the moment."

Sirius and Lupin chuckled and grinned at him.

"You're coming with us kiddo," answered Sirius. "Why bother staying at Privet Drive when your relatives aren't at home anyway? We just move your planned departure a little bit forwards."

"YES!" screamed Harry in joy and jumped into the air. "When do we leave? I've still got my things at the Dursley's."

"Relax cub," said Lupin chuckling. "We are going to apparate to Surrey to get your things, but first I have to speak with Dumbledore."

Harry nodded. "You do that Professor."

"Please Harry. I haven't been your Professor for over a year. Call me Remus or Moony."

"As you wish Moony," said Harry and bowed playfully.

"You use the floo and go to Privet Drive and pack your stuff. We're going to get you there."

Harry grinned and took a bit of floo powder and threw it into the fire. He stepped inside and vanished to Mrs. Figg's house. He fell out of the fireplace and nearly crashed into a small coffee table. He heard a scream and took his wand out. He blinked.

Mrs. Figg lay sprawled on the floor and looked at him with wide eyes.

"By all that's holy...", she said and staggered to her feet. "Harry dear? Is that you?"

Harry nodded. "Sorry Mrs. Figg. I haven't got much time. My godfather is picking me up in a few minutes."

He left Mrs. Figg standing there perplexed and hurried to the front door. For the first time he managed not to trip over one of the many cats that were running around in the house and was outside in a flash. He walked along the street when suddenly the air around him grew cold and a familiar feeling crawled up his spine. He felt that all happiness and hope had left him and his breath quickened.

He looked at a car's window which slowly started to freeze. "It can't be..."

His breath was visible now and came in small clouds out of his mouth. He looked around but couldn't see anything. Harry slowly started to walk again and clutched his wand tightly in his hands. The street lights that were already turned on flickered and disappeared and for the early evening it suddenly grew dark.

He stopped again when he felt something brush his cloak from behind and whirled around to find himself face to face with one of the foul creatures that he had hoped never to see again. A Dementor. He jumped backwards and held his wand high when two more Dementors appeared behind the first one.

"Today's not my day!" he whined and took another step back when they closed in on him.

"Expecto Patronum!"

A slight silvery mist shot out of the tip of his wand, but soon vanished. He had practiced the curse over a hundred times together with Malfoy but still couldn't really get it right in front of an actual Dementor! His eyes widened as one of the Dementors started to reach with his glistening grayish and scabbed hand towards its hood.

Harry didn't wait long. "Expecto Patronum!"

Nothing... the Dementor pulled its hood down and Harry could see the thing that was its mouth.

“Damn... Ex-expecto... Patronum!”

Again just the silvery mist. What the heck was wrong with him?! The Dementor closed the distance between itself and Harry. Harry staggered backwards when the screams of his mother rang in his ears. He heard the cold laughter of Voldemort and his father's shouts...

A cold hand gripped his neck and he was lifted from the ground. He smelled the foul breath of the Dementor who was ready to give him its kiss.

“No... you don't you filthy scumbag!” whispered Harry quietly when he felt his insides growing cold and his rapidly beating heart slowing down.

“HARRY!” he heard somebody scream loudly.

He raised his wand. “Expecto Patronum!”

Finally! The bright shimmering silver stag flew out of his wand and the Dementor immediately jumped backwards. The stag galloped around on the street and drove the Dementors away with his antlers. It lifted his hooves and suddenly a bright silver dog and a wolf joined him.

Harry smiled slightly when all three of the Dementors disappeared into the sky. “Moony, Padfoot and Prongs... together again.”

He looked to his left where Remus and Sirius were standing not far away. They stared at the three Patronus' too and snapped out of it when they suddenly vanished.

“Kiddo! Are you alright?” asked Sirius in a panicky voice as he ran over to Harry, Remus hot on his heels.

Harry slowly stood up and nodded briskly. “Yeah... I'm okay.”

Remus sighed, relieved, and reached into his pocket. Harry stared at him open-mouthed when he handed him and Sirius a piece of chocolate and bit into a piece himself.

“Do you always carry chocolate in your cloak?” he asked baffled.

Remus shrugged. “I just love chocolate. And as you can see it comes in handy.”

“Yeah...,” said Sirius with narrowed eyes. “I just want to know what Dementors were doing here... oh damn! Harry did do underage magic!”

“And we’ve got company at the peanut gallery,” Harry threw in.

They looked around and saw that lots of the neighbors were staring at them with their jaws reaching the ground.

“Bullocks!” cursed Sirius and scratched his head. “This is going to cause a whole lot of trouble with the Ministry.”

Remus sighed and Harry raised his wand.

“Obliviate Maxima,” he said quickly and a bright blue flash blinded them for a short moment. “They won’t be able to remember anything. Come on!”

He hurried along the rest of the street until he reached the doorstep to number four. He opened it with a quick Alohomora and went inside.

“Are you insane? You’ve already done enough underage magic for today!” hollered Remus.

Harry ignored him. “Accio trunk, Hedwig’s cage and Firebolt.”

“Harry James Potter!” said Remus angrily when Harry’s things came flying down the stairs and landed in front of him.

He grinned at Remus while Sirius was smirking in a very Slytherin like manner. Harry swished his wand and his things shrunk to the size of golf balls. He bent down and put them into his pocket.

"I give up!" said Remus exasperated. "You're probably already expelled from Hogwarts so why bother..."

"Moony?"

"Not yet Padfoot. I'm thinking about a way to lessen the consequences."

"Mooooony?" Sirius tired again.

"Not now!"

Sirius looked at Harry who grinned cheekily and took a deep breath.

"MOONY!" they screamed together.

Remus threw his hands in the air and rolled his eyes. "What is it, damn it?!"

Sirius moved his hands around. "Have you seen any Ministry owls? Or someone who wants to snap Harry's wand?"

Remus blinked and then shook his head in the negative. Harry looked down at his shoes which had suddenly become much more interesting.

"So Harry doesn't seem to be in trouble at all," concluded Sirius.

Remus blinked again. "You... you're right. This is... rather unexpected."

"Can we go now?" asked Harry whining. "Dumbledore gave his okay, didn't he?"

"Yes pup we can go now," said Sirius and grabbed his shoulder. "But first you have to read this."

He gave him a piece of parchment and Harry carefully read it. The Headquarters of the Order of the Phoenix are at Number Twelve Grimmauld Place, London.

"Are Ron and Hermione there as well?" he asked his godfather who nodded. "I didn't know you still lived in this house after your mother died. Isn't there a grumpy old house elf running around taking orders from her picture?"

Sirius and Remus looked at each other with wide eyes and Harry slapped his forehead. He wasn't supposed to know that!

"Well..." said Sirius, suddenly unsure and Harry felt the familiar sensation of Apparition tingling in his muscles. "Let's go then."

When they stood on solid ground again, Harry looked around and saw that they were standing on a cold and dusty street that Harry had often seen in Narcissa Malfoy's pensieve when she had taught him about the Dark Arts and the proud pure-blooded families. He looked around but didn't see Number Twelve. Instead he just saw Number Eleven and Number Thirteen. He was just looking between the two houses, when Remus appeared next to Sirius and suddenly the two houses moved and another door appeared. The door was followed by a wall and two big windows and with a crack he stood in front of Number Twelve.

"Ah... is it the Fidelius Charm? Is Dumbledore the Secret-Keeper?" Harry wanted to know.

Sirius nodded and exchanged a look with Remus who just shrugged helplessly. He led Harry through the door and he found himself in a dimly lit hallway with a big staircase and a pair of giant curtains on the wall.

"Dumbledore awaits us in the kitchen. It's the staircase that leads down," whispered Remus. "He said that nobody else will be here at the moment. We are going to get your room ready in the meantime."

Harry nodded and quietly passed the curtains which again earned him a surprised look from the two Marauders. He went down the stairs and opened the door. He didn't bother to look around because he already knew what the whole house looked like from the memories.

In front of a big fireplace stood the familiar form of Albus Dumbledore. He had his back turned to Harry and was crouched down a bit and he realized that he was making a fire-call to somebody. He quietly turned to the cupboard on the left side of the kitchen and took out a bottle of butterbeer and then leaned on the stove while he shrunk his cloak and put it into his jeans pocket.

After a short while the flames in the fireplace died down and Dumbledore straightened himself before he turned around. He stopped and blinked when he saw Harry standing at the stove and then smiled with a twinkle in his eyes.

"Harry, my boy! My... you have grown, look at yourself!" he said and looked at him approvingly. "Sit down, sit down. We've got much to talk about. How were your holidays till now?"

Harry nodded after a while and murmured a short answer. Dumbledore hadn't been looking into his eyes. He stared at his head or shoulders. He narrowed his eyes and sat down on a chair near the fire.

"It's nice to see you too Professor," said Harry when Dumbledore was seated as well. "I hope you are well, Sir."

"Indeed I am," answered Dumbledore, still not looking into his eyes and it started to annoy Harry greatly. "And by the looks of it you are faring well too."

"Yeah...", said Harry slowly as he scanned Dumbledore's face. "Professor... may I ask why you aren't looking at me but merely at my shoulders?"

Dumbledore's head rocked up and he quickly looked into his eyes before he looked elsewhere again. "Sorry, my boy. It comes with the age."



Harry said nothing.

Dumbledore coughed quietly. "Well... like I said... we've got much to talk about. I was surprised when Remus called me and told me he met you at the Leaky Caldron and that your relatives weren't at home."

"Professor...", said Harry quietly in a low whisper when Dumbledore looked everywhere but at him, causing him to flinch slightly. "If you are worried about Voldemort gaining information through me... I'm a skilled Occlumens."

Now Dumbledore looked into his eyes. The surprise evident on his face. "You know Occlumency? How's that?"

"I had enough time over the holidays if you know what I mean, Sir," he drank a little bit of his butterbeer and looked Dumbledore straight in the eyes. "Was that the reason why you told my friends not to tell me anything?"

"You had enough... time?" asked Dumbledore slowly. "But it's impossible to learn Occlumency in just four weeks. And yes... that was the reason."

"I had enough time," said Harry again and suddenly Dumbledore's eyes widened slightly as he nodded.

"It seems that we have more to talk about than I thought," he said seriously. "My first question is, may I test your mental shields? Just for safety."

Harry nodded and stared into Dumbledore's eyes as he felt a prodding sensation in his mind. He blinked and raised his Occlumency shields and then it was gone and Dumbledore gasped.

"I'm impressed Harry," he said after a short while and smiled at him with his twinkle turned on fully. "You are indeed a very skilled Occlumens. I never saw anyone who could throw me out of their mind that fast."

"Thank you, Sir," Harry smiled back. "So can we proceed?"

"Yes, of course," answered Dumbledore and folded his fingers. "At first I would like to know when and how you gained access to a time turner and for how long you used it."

Harry nodded. "Very well. I will try to leave nothing out." He took a little time to sort everything out. "You can say it began after the third task and Voldemort's return at the graveyard..."

Flashback

Harry groaned as he woke up under the familiar ceiling of the Hogwarts Hospital Wing and he tried to get out of the sheets that were tangled around his legs. Suddenly he heard a grunt and looked to his right only to find his bed curtains there. He drew them back and saw the form of Professor Moody – this time the real one – lying at the other side of the room. He blinked and reached for his glasses that lay on his nightstand. He didn't bother to wait for Madam Pomfrey to check on him but stood up shakily. Harry noted with relief that he wore normal clothes and not the standard hospital gown, and looked out of the window. It was just dawn and he reckoned that it was between five and six AM.

He crept out of the Hospital Wing before the Healer realized that he was awake and move quietly down the corridor. He didn't really know where to go and decided to take a stroll around the lake. When he passed the Entrance Hall he heard footsteps and hurried a little bit. He opened the doors and breathed in the fresh morning air and sighed. The events of the last day came to his mind and he shook his head and slowly went to the Quidditch field where you could still see the maze from the third task.

He went through the locker rooms and was standing at the entrance of the maze within a few minutes. He struggled with the memories of Voldemort and Cedric's lifeless body and shuddered. He looked at the trophy that lay on the ground exactly where he had reappeared the evening before and knelt by it. Harry didn't dare touch it again out of fear that it would bring him back to the graveyard. He flinched

as he heard footsteps and raised his wand when they suddenly stopped behind him.

"Relax Potter," said a familiar voice and he turned around.

"Malfoy?" Harry asked in surprise and took a closer look at the other boy.

Malfoy looked like he hadn't slept in days and his normally perfectly styled hair stood up in every direction much like his own. His robes were a bit wrinkled and he didn't have his wand drawn so Harry lowered his own.

"What are you doing here?" Harry wanted to know suspiciously.

"I guessed that you would be here and came down." Malfoy hesitated. "I... want to talk to you about something."

"What?" asked Harry perplexed? "About what?"

Malfoy sighed and sat down on the soft grass. Harry too hesitated a moment then sat down facing him.

"You have to swear that you won't tell anybody about it!" said Malfoy pleading.

After a short while Harry nodded. This wasn't the Draco Malfoy he knew. "I... I swear."

"Good. So... yesterday... after you came back from the graveyard with Diggory's body - and I believe you when you say it was a graveyard- then... my father sent a letter to me." Harry nodded when Malfoy's voice faltered and he went on. "He... he wants me to become a Death Eater and I don't know what I should do... I had hoped that you... well that you could help me somehow."

Harry raised his eyebrows. "Why me? How should I be able to help you?"

"Because you are the bloody 'Boy-Who-Lived' and all that!" said Malfoy a little bit louder but didn't look at him.

Harry rubbed his head. "I... well I don't know what to say... I didn't expect that you of all people didn't want to become a Death Eater. I mean... no offence, but you always go around like Voldemort's junior brigade."

Malfoy sighed. "I know... but it's just because of my father. I had to act like a total moron and little junior killer; otherwise he would have punished me."

"And what changed your opinion?" Harry wanted to know curiously.

"My mother is now divorced. Yesterday it became official approved by the Ministry, and I live with her now. Father is still able to come into our house but he no longer has the right to tell me what to do. I... my mother is really happy now and nothing is more important to me than that it stays like this. She may not look like it in public, but she abhors 'You-Know-Who' and his actions."

Now that was a real surprise for Harry! He had met Narcissa Malfoy at the Quidditch World Cup and she looked like she was just another one of those proud and arrogant purebloods. But then again... Malfoy didn't seem to be what he always led Harry to believe either.

"What do you want to do about it then?" he asked the blonde Slytherin.

Malfoy looked up. "I want to train to fight against the Dark Lord! When my father finds out that mother and I are against this pureblood hierarchy he will be furious and I can tell you that he won't hesitate to kill my mother and me. I rather hoped that... that you could help me with this task."

"How would this work out? The day after tomorrow when the train arrives at King's Cross I will be locked away at my relative's house until someone decides to let me come over."

"You could stay at my house," suggested Malfoy and Harry's eyes nearly popped out of his head.

"Are you serious?!" he asked loudly.

Draco smirked. "No. Sirius is that mutt of my cousin who runs around here somewhere in his animagus form. My name is Draco."

Harry stared at him, mouth agape and then burst out into laughter but stopped when he realized something.

"You know about Sirius' animagus form and didn't tell anybody?"

Malfoy nodded. "In third year... you know when we had that little truce after Granger punched me in the face..." Harry chuckled a bit. It was right after that incident, they really had a little truce but it had only lasted three weeks. Not that his friends knew about it. "After that, shortly before the train's departure I saw the huge black dog and immediately knew that it was Sirius."

"But Malfoy... how?"

"My mum... she was on very good terms with him when they were in school. Not like my Aunt Bellatrix and the other Slytherins. She found out about his transformation in her seventh year and told me when he broke out of Azkaban last year."

"I see," mused Harry. "But your father is going to kill me on the spot if I stay at your house!"

Draco shook his head. "My mother and I are staying in an old manor in France for the holidays. Father probably will still come sometimes, but we will be alerted when he does."

"So you really believe Voldemort is back?" Harry asked quietly. "And you want us to train together to fight against him?"

"I do," Draco said.

"And so do I," said a girl's voice with a heavy accent behind them.

Harry and Draco whirled around and stared at the person who came across the field towards them and sat down on the grass. It was Fleur Delacour, the Beauxbatons' Champion.

"What?" Harry and Malfoy asked simultaneously.

"I 'eard w'at 'ou were talking about. And I vant to fight 'im too," answered Fleur. "I believe 'ou when 'ou say zat Voldemort eez back."

"Ah, Fleur this is nice but... how?" asked Malfoy.

Fleur chuckled. "Ahh, but 'ou forget zat I live in Francé. And I owe 'Arry somezing because 'e rescued moi zister Gabrielle."

Harry and Draco looked at each other and shrugged before they smiled at her.

"Then I look forward to seeing you at France Mannor, Fleur. You can reach it by floo," said Malfoy. "And by the way Potter... my name is Draco, got it?"

Harry smiled slightly. "But only when my name is Harry."

"I meet you zen at ze station of ze 'Ogwarts Express," said Fleur who stood up smiling.

The two boys nodded and stood up as well. Fleur kissed them each on the cheek and left.

Harry turned around too but was stopped by Malfoy.

"Thank you... Harry."

Harry smile grew. "No problem Draco."

End Flashback

"After that, Mrs. Malfoy picked Draco and me up at the station. She waited there together with Fleur who was disguised and we went to

France Manor," said Harry to Dumbledore who listened intently with the twinkle in his eyes on full force.

"After three days we had finished our assigned homework with a little help from Fleur, Mrs. Malfoy found out that we wanted to train together and showed us her time turner. We used it regularly and Mrs. Malfoy instructed us in the Dark Arts and the history of the proud pureblooded families. She was also the one who taught us three Occlumency and a little bit of Legillimency. I know this house from the roof down to the basement, because Mrs. Malfoy had a lot of memories from here."

"This is really a remarkable achievement, my boy," said Dumbledore after a short silence as he played with his fingers. "Tell me. How long were the holidays for you with the time turner?"

Harry smiled sheepishly. "A little less than a whole year, Sir."

"I thought as much," smiled Dumbledore. "But it seems to have helped you to improve a lot. And it tells me why I didn't get an owl from the Ministry because of underage magic at Privet Drive today informing me that you are expelled as a result."

"You know about that?" Harry asked surprised.

Dumbledore nodded. "The protection around the house alerts me when magic is done in Surrey and can filter the different magical signatures. I realized it was yours and waited for an owl, but it didn't come. May I ask why you did magic?"

Suddenly the door opened and Sirius, followed by Remus entered the kitchen.

"Because there were three Dementors in Little Whinging," said Remus gravely and Harry gulped down some butterbeer after the long story.

Dumbledore's eyes flashed dangerously and he looked at Harry. "Dementors?"

Harry nodded briskly and saw that Sirius and Remus threw strange looks at him.

"Pup... I wanted to ask you something..." said Sirius hesitantly. "How did you know about this house and that Kreacher takes orders from my mother's portrait?"

Harry looked at Dumbledore. "I assume you will tell them anyways?" The Professor nodded and Harry grinned. "Then I don't have to tell them now. That will be your job then."

Dumbledore chuckled while Sirius and Remus groaned in disappointment.

"Where are Ron and Hermione?" asked Harry after a stretch of silence. "You said they were here, didn't you?"

"They are upstairs cleaning the house. It looks like a bomb is exploded up there. The whole Weasley clan is here. Except Percy, he had a big argument with his parents and the two eldest Bill and Charlie. The latter are at work."

"By the way, your room is on the third floor. The first door when you go up," said Remus.

"Would you not tell my friends that I'm here? I want to wait until breakfast," said Harry and grinned mischievously.

"Of course pup!" said Sirius with an equal grin. "I think it's time that you get an actual Marauder name! It's your fifth year at Hogwarts after all."

Harry nodded and stood up, but at the door he turned around smirking and looked at Dumbledore and then at the last two Marauders. "Think about something that stands for the name of the Order, and is black."

He waited until it dawned on them and chuckled as Sirius' and Remus' jaws hit the ground while Dumbledore looked at him in



astonishment. Before they could say anything else he left the kitchen and went up the stairs to the hallway.

He stopped in front of the curtains and heard a very loud 'NO WAY!' from the kitchen. He jumped when the curtains opened and a shrill scream echoed through the hall. Harry blinked and looked into the face of Walburga Black, Sirius' mother.

"THEY ARE A DISGRACE, SCUM AND BLOODTRAITORS IN MY HOUSE! MUDBLOODS! FILTHY LITTLE-"

"Shut up Lady Black!" said Harry calmly.

She stopped and looked at him. "Who are you boy that you dare to talk to me!"

Harry stared back into the eyes of the painting. "My name is Harry James Potter."

Mrs. Black sneered at him. "You are the half-blood who killed the Dark Lord! Get out of my sight!"

Harry shook his head slowly. "No. I just wanted to say hello from your niece Narcissa."

The Portrait blinked and her expression changed. "You know my little Cissy?"

Harry nodded. "I spent the last weeks together with her and her son Draco."

Mrs. Black was silent and scanned him from head to toe. Harry smirked when she looked into his eyes and raised his eyebrows.

"You... don't seem too bad," she said then. "Maybe you are able to throw this filthy scum out of the house."

"I'm afraid that is not possible Lady Black.", said Harry formally and looked at the stairs where he now could see two people standing, watching him.

"Why is that?" she asked curiously.

Harry bowed in apology. "This isn't my house, so I have no right to decide who is allowed to have admittance. I would love to help you, but I can't. My apologies Lady Black."

"At least you are a well mannered young man who has respect for his elders," said Mrs. Black and smiled. A disturbing sight, Harry thought.

"That is how it has to be," said Harry and bowed again. "I don't want to be rude, but I have to go. I have some activities planned that are of the utmost importance and can't be delayed. It was nice to talk to you Lady Black."

"Likewise," she said, and the curtains closed.

Harry heard hushed whispering at the stairs and looked at the two people standing there. One was a teenage girl who had smooth brown curls reaching her mid back, chocolate brown eyes and a very athletic body. The other one was a tall and lanky redheaded teenage boy with blue eyes and freckles on his nose.

Harry smiled when he saw his two best friends standing there, even though he was sure that they wouldn't recognize him. He stepped forward and stopped in front of them. They stopped whispering and looked at him with wide eyes. Harry grinned on the inside and bowed slightly in front of Ron before he took Hermione's hand and kissed it softly. Oh yes, he wasn't the only one who had grown. In his opinion Hermione was much more beautiful than Fleur.

"It's a pleasure to meet you two," he said and stared deeply into Hermione's eyes. She blushed and looked at her feet smiling. "Especially such a beautiful lady who looks like she could light the whole house with her luminescent appearance."

Hermione's blush deepened and Harry, satisfied, looked at Ron who was staring at him.

"It's a pleasure to meet you as well," Hermione said quietly.

"Yeah...", said Ron scowling.

"I'm sorry, but do either of you know which room Remus Lupin and Sirius Black set up some minutes ago? I don't know my way around the house and I'm afraid I will end up in the wrong room."

He smiled at Hermione and realized that his heartbeat had quickened a little bit when she looked into his eyes.

"Yes. I saw they made a room ready. I can lead the way if you'd like," said Hermione and Harry saw Ron roll his eyes.

"That would be excellent, Harry replied.

Hermione smiled and Ron's scowl deepened as they climbed the stairs. They stopped on the third floor and Hermione indicated the first door in the hallway.

"This is the room they set up."

"Thank you very much, said Harry and kissed her hand again. He nodded to Ron who briskly nodded back and quickly led Hermione away from him.

Harry smiled when he heard them whispering all the way down the stairs.

"Who was that?" asked Hermione.

Ron's answer followed suit. "I don't know but he surely is a dark wizard. Have you seen Mrs. Black? She never gets so friendly with anyone except Snape!"

"Oh Ron you worry too much."

"But he talked like Malfoy!"

"Strange. I just heard Malfoy talking with insults until now and what he said definitely weren't insults."

“But he is dark!”

He heard Hermione sighing. “But really good looking...”

He grinned and entered his room. It was simple and elegant at the same time. A large bed stood in the middle of the room and a wooden wardrobe was there. His clothes were already inside and Hedwig sat perched on the windowsill.

Harry shuffled through his pockets and took out some owl treats.

“Here you are girl,” he said and she gratefully took them. “For this morning and the quick delivery of Draco’s letter. Are you up to another flight to France tomorrow?”

Hedwig hooted softly and nibbled his finger. He took that as a ‘yes’ and threw himself on the bed. He was suddenly exhausted. He changed out of his clothes and into some comfortable boxers and drifted off to sleep.

That was that.

I hope you liked the chapter.

Don't forget the Reviews!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 4

Harry opened his eyes and stretched his legs. He had really slept wonderfully! He looked out of the window and saw that again it was only dawn. He cursed Draco and Fleur before he stood up. Somehow they had managed to make sure he was always awake at this unholy hour!

He decided that he couldn't sleep anyways and took some running clothes out of his wardrobe. He slipped the skintight sleeveless black shirt over his head and then jumped into his long training pants. He snatched a towel from the small bathroom that was near his room and put on his running shoes. He silently went down the stairs and slipped out the door on the street.

He looked at his watch. It was 5:15 so he decided to run until 6 o'clock. Harry did some stretches and then he hit the road.

His run wasn't very eventful. He jogged two miles until he saw an underground station and shook his head when he saw some drunken guy trying to go over the barrier without being seen. He did some stretches again when he reached a small park and did sit-ups, jumping-jacks and crunches before he decided to head back to Grimmauld Place again. When he was in the house again he took the towel he had around his neck and heard a loud bang from upstairs followed by an enraged scream that could only be Sirius'.

Immediately Mrs. Black's curtains were thrown open and she was preparing to start screaming when she saw Harry standing there and closed her mouth.

"God morning Lady Black," said Harry and bowed gracefully. "I hope you are faring well and had a good night's rest."

Mrs. Black smiled tightly. "Indeed young man. I hope you slept well also, even if it is very early. Were you out training?"

"So it is, and yes I did, thank you," nodded Harry and his eyes turned to the stairs where Remus and Sirius were now standing and gaping

at him open mouthed. Their eyes jumped from Mrs. Black's portrait to Harry and back.

Mrs. Black sneered. "Ah, there is my good for nothing mudblood-loving son and the werewolf who taints my house."

Harry narrowed his eyes. "Forgive me Lady Black but your son Sirius is my godfather and Remus Lupin is a brave man who has accomplished much in his life. I would prefer it if you don't insult them."

She looked at him and blinked before she smiled again. "Of course my dear. I wasn't thinking. I hope you give my regards to Cissy and her son when you see her next."

"I will do that Lady Black. Have a nice day."

Mrs. Black nodded and the curtains closed again. Harry dried his hair with the towel around his neck and grinned at Sirius and Remus who were standing there as if petrified.

Sirius snapped out of it first. "Damn pup! That was bloody brilliant!"

Remus was just standing there staring at nothing. "How... she talked... didn't scream... was friendly... how?"

Sirius waved his hands in front of his friend's face and then shrugged helplessly.

"I think his brain has shut off due to overload," said Harry

"Yeah," said Sirius and looked at him. "You've got a lot of explaining to do kiddo. Let's get down to the kitchen. I'm starving to death here."

Harry nodded and they left Remus standing on the staircase before Sirius hit him over the head and he blinked and followed suit.

"So...", said Harry when Sirius was working at the stove and brewing some coffee. "What do you want to know?"

It was Remus who answered. "We want to see your animagus transformation!"

Harry raised his eyebrows and buttered himself some toast. "So you got the hint yesterday, huh?"

"Of course we did pup!" said Sirius and balanced some pancakes onto the table. "Even if Dumbledore needed to throw a bucket of water over our heads."

"Alright," said Harry. "But first let me eat breakfast and change my clothes."

Their faces fell, but then they nodded and Harry quickly went upstairs to change. When he passed the second floor he could hear that the other occupants of the house were awake too. He needed ten minutes for a quick shower and then changed into the same jeans as yesterday and took out a dark red sleeveless shirt with a silver and black Phoenix on the back. He finished the look with a silver pendant of a Phoenix which he had gotten from Fleur and a black belt.

He went back downstairs again and saw Sirius and Remus waiting for him with gleaming eyes.

"Let's see it!" said Sirius jumping up and down, nearly throwing his teacup on the floor.

Harry nodded and closed his eyes. He felt his body changing and when he opened them again Sirius and Remus were staring at him in awe. They were much taller than before and Harry had to look up to them. He flapped his black feathered wings and rose into the air. It was always a strange feeling to be in his animagus form, he thought when he flew over to Sirius and perched on his shoulders. He opened his beak and trilled some happy notes that sounded exactly like when Dumbledore's Phoenix Fawkes did it.

"I can't believe it...," whispered Remus and hesitantly touched Harry's head. "You are really a Phoenix..."

Harry trilled again and leaned his head into his touch when suddenly the fireplace flared and Albus Dumbledore appeared.

"Sorry for my early appearance," he said into the room to no one in particular. "My watch doesn't work at the moment."

He looked around and stopped in his tracks when he saw Harry in his animagus form.

"Oh my...", he breathed and Harry looked at him, his head slightly tilted to the side.

Dumbledore slowly took a few steps forward and Harry left his place on Sirius' shoulder and landed on the table near the Professor. He trilled some encouraging notes and Dumbledore smiled. Of course his twinkle was on full force again.

"What a magnificent creature you are... really beautiful," he said quietly and stroked his feathers softly. "A Shadow Phoenix... a very rare specimen. Marvelous!"

"Ha!" screamed Sirius and everyone looked at him. "I've got a Marauder name for him!"

Harry rose into the air and changed back into his human form. "And this name would be?" he asked when his feet touched the ground.

"Shadow," said Sirius smiling. "Plain and simple. A perfect match for your form."

Harry nodded. "Then 'Shadow' it shall be."

Dumbledore clapped his hands. "Well then, I came at exactly the right time. I hadn't thought that you three would be here this early. Normally Molly is the first person downstairs."

Sirius grunted. "Remus woke me up with a bucket of ice water... after that I couldn't sleep anymore."



Dumbledore smiled and sat down at the head of the table. "Well then we have much to talk about. Did you see anyone yesterday Harry?"

Harry grinned. "Yep. I had a little chat with Ron and Hermione. But they didn't recognize me. When they thought they were out of hearing range Ron kept going on about me being a dark wizard because I talked to Sirius' mum civilly."

Dumbledore's eyebrows rose. "But this is indeed very rare."

He shrugged. "I said 'hello' from Mrs. Malfoy to her and 'bang' she stopped screeching and was friendly."

Remus laughed. "So that's what it was!"

Harry nodded. "Well. I guess you and Sirius have some questions regarding my holidays so far. Am I right?"

The two Marauders nodded and Harry sat down too and ate his already buttered toast.

"Albus told us what you told him yesterday and I have to say that I'm very proud of you pup," said Sirius smiling. "I was always on good terms with Cissy in school and I couldn't stand to see her with Malfoy. You said she is divorced now... I think as the head of the House of Black, I should talk to her."

Harry nodded smiling. "She said she would be glad to meet with you. She is at the France Manor at the moment and I should tell you that she has opened the floo for you so you can go and visit her. But you have to write a letter to her first because of Lucius."

Sirius nodded and now it was Remus' turn. "I would like to know what you learned in the last four weeks... or should I say the past year from your point of view?"

Harry leaned back in his chair and reached for a cup of coffee. "Well... you could say I had very intense DADA training. But I learned not only to defend myself against the dark arts but also how to cast

some curses myself. Mrs. Malfoy also taught me Ancient Runes, Arithmancy and History of Magic with some outside help.

With Draco and Fleur I learned fencing, dueling, hand-to-hand combat and of course the animagus transformation.” Harry chuckled. “They had a hard time teaching me Potions... I’m not very good in that subject but with Draco’s, Fleur’s and Mrs. Malfoy’s help I think I can now rival Snape.”

“That is remarkable, my boy!” said Dumbledore happily. “Not only did you learn to fight, but Occlumency and a bit of Legilimency as well. This is indeed very good, I won’t have to convince Severus to teach you this year.”

Harry nodded. “Professor... I would like to know if it is possible to change my classes? I would like to drop Divination and take Arithmancy and Ancient Runes instead.”

“You have to talk to Minerva about it, but I don’t really see a problem with that.”

Harry smiled and suddenly the kitchen door opened and Molly Weasley appeared in the kitchen. She stopped and smiled.

“Oh. Good morning Albus, Remus and Sirius. It’s a surprise to see you here,” she said friendly and she looked at Harry curiously. “And who might you be, young man?”

Harry grinned and Sirius and Remus burst into laughter. Even Dumbledore chuckled at Mrs. Weasley’s now confused face.

“Did I say something wrong?” she asked perplexed.

Harry still grinned, stood up and grazed his hair away from his forehead and sniffled. “Mrs. Weasley I’m wounded that you don’t recognize me.”

She stared at him and then screamed in joy. “Oh my god! HARRY!”

Before Harry had seen her move he found his bones being crushed in a giant Weasley hug. He struggled a little bit to get free and smiled when she finally released him. She laughed heartedly and turned him around.

Oh, I can't believe it!" she said happily and fussed over him with wide eyes like a mother. "You have grown so much! You actually look healthy and well fed and... oh my! You look quite handsome Harry dear!"

Harry smiled and bowed playfully. "Thank you Mrs. Weasley. You look quite dashing yourself this wonderful morning."

Mrs. Weasley blushed a little bit and rested her hands on his shoulders and Dumbledore chuckled while Sirius and Remus smiled at each other with a slightly sad gaze.

Suddenly loud banging was heard and the kitchen door was thrown open. Harry grinned when he saw the whole Weasley clan and Hermione staggering through the door. They all looked a little bit banged up and their clothes were crumpled like they had hurried to change into them.

"Mum? Did I hear right? Is Harry here?" asked Ron and rubbed his head because of Fred who came running into the kitchen and held onto him so as not to fall.

"We heard you scream his name Mrs. Weasley!" said Hermione jumping up and down while looking around the room.

Her eyes suddenly met Harry's and she stopped jumping. She looked him up and down like yesterday and her eyes rested on his scar for the breadth of a second and she gasped. The other Weasley's looked at her as she dashed forwards and threw her arms around his neck.

"HARRY!" she screamed like Mrs. Weasley and squeezed him tightly. "It was you yesterday! Why didn't you say anything?"

Harry hugged her back and looked over her shoulder to see all the other Weasley's standing there with their mouths agape. Ron opened

and closed his mouth but no sound came out and Fred and George stared at him in awe. Ginny on the other hand 'eeped' when he looked at her and blushed beet red and looked down at her feet.

He bent down a little and whispered so that only Hermione could hear him: "I missed you 'Mione. I'm glad to see you."

She blushed and let him go, but her hand stayed on his arm. She looked at her feet before she smiled brightly at him. He smiled back and then looked at the other Weasleys.

"Wow mate... that really you?" asked Ron astonished and walked around him once before giving him a one armed hug. "Damn! I didn't recognize you! Were your relatives brainwashed or what! What did they feed you?"

"Ronald!" scolded Mrs. Weasley, her hands on her hips.

He ignored his mother and looked Harry up and down. Ron was still a little bit taller than Harry, because he seemed to have had a growth spurt over the last four weeks as well, but he was still lanky and had a lean body. Harry looked down at Hermione again who still had her hand on his arm. He now was a good head taller than her, but saw that she too had grown quite a lot. She now was 5.8 and had long legs and a perfect body.

"You really have changed you know," said Hermione smiling and kissed him on the cheek before she sat down next to Remus and helped herself to some breakfast.

Harry touched his cheek where she had kissed him and grinned. He didn't know exactly when his feelings had changed, but somehow Hermione was now a little bit more than his best female friend. Maybe...

Harry looked at the twins who now stood in front of him.

"Merlin's balls. You look absolutely dashing..." started Fred and shook his hand.

“-marvelous...,” was George’s reply.

“-extraordinary...”

“-just absolutely...”

“BRILLIANT!” they chorused together and grinned from ear to ear.

“Thanks Gred. Thanks Forge,” retorted Harry and he was grinning too.

Suddenly Ron patted him on the arm and he followed him to the table. Harry sat down next to Hermione and Ron sat on his other side. Harry smiled when he saw Ron shoveling food on his plate, his table manners hadn’t changed a bit. Hermione wrinkled her nose when she looked at Ron eating and Harry chuckled.

Ron looked up between bites of pancake. “Say mate... it was you yesterday wasn’t it? The guy who talked with the portrait of Mrs. Black?”

Harry nodded. “Yeah. That was me and I can tell you I’m definitely not a dark wizard.”

The redhead grinned sheepishly and frowned then. “But... were you trying to flirt with Hermione, or what?”

Harry heard a choking noise next to him and saw that Hermione had tears in her eyes and was coughing. He softly patted her on the back and she swallowed after a moment and sighed in exasperation.

“Thanks,” she said smiling, and then looked at Ron with a dangerous glint in her eyes that made even Harry gulp. “What did you just say Ronald?”

Ron shrunk down in his chair and shook his head. Hermione huffed and slowly ate her pancake. Her eyes often drifted to Harry and he felt himself blushing a bit.

"So...", said Harry in an attempt to start a conversation. "What have you two been up to? There wasn't much information in your letters. You always just told me to stop mourning Cedric."

Ron and Hermione exchanged some uncomfortable looks and stayed silent for a short moment.

"Harry... you see... we really wanted to tell you, but Dumbledore made us swear not to tell you," said Hermione quietly after she had finished breakfast. "It would have been very bad if this information had reached the wrong hands."

"Yeah, mate," said Ron who was still eating heartily. "We don't really know what's going on anyways. They never let us stay for the meetings."

Harry stared at Dumbledore who was talking animatedly with Mrs. Weasley. "I imagine. So the Order holds its meetings here?"

Hermione nodded but stopped suddenly and looked at him. "You know about the Order? How is that?"

"Dumbledore told me. You know... I've been here since yesterday evening. Did you already forget that?"

"Why did you arrive yesterday anyway? They were planning to pick you up next Monday and now you suddenly are here a week before that," asked Ron.

Harry leaned back in his chair. "I ran into Sirius and Remus when I was shopping in Diagon Alley yesterday. They interrogated me, asked Dumbledore if I could come over earlier because my relatives aren't at home anyway, and after a quick fight with three Dementors we arrived here."

"WHAT?! Diagon Alley? Dementors? Harry what the hell were you doing there on your own? Are you okay?" asked Hermione indignantly and seemed to check him over for injuries.

"I'm okay 'Mione," chuckled Harry. "As I said, my relatives went to visit Vernon's sister and they dumped me in London. I think they hoped to get rid of me that way," he lied. "So I thought, why bother, and went shopping. And if you don't believe me take my clothes for example. I've finally got something that fits."

"Right...", said Ron when Hermione finished checking him over. "But what was that with Mrs. Black in the evening? I never heard you talk like that! I thought you were some arrogant git like Malfoy!"

"I had enough free time at the Dursley's and ordered some books from Flourish & Blott's with Hedwig," said Harry shrugging. It was true. He, Fleur and Draco had ordered quite a lot, but also from Knockturn Alley. "There were some books about Wizarding etiquette."

"Are you nuts mate?" said Ron loudly and Remus looked over to them. "Don't tell me you are turning into another Hermione!"

"What's that supposed to mean Ronald?" snarled Hermione.

"Uh... nothing... forget it.", said Ron quickly.

Remus chuckled and looked at Harry while the two friends were arguing over his head. "You know... those two behave like a married couple sometimes. I even think they are going to end up together."

Harry gave a lopsided smile. He wasn't really sure if he liked the idea of Ron and Hermione being together...

"I asked what you meant by that Ron!" said Hermione loudly.

Ron cowed in fear when he saw the rage in her eyes. "I-I just... You are a walking encyclopedia. We don't need another one!"

"And who is going to help you with your homework then?" asked Hermione angrily.

"You, of course!" said Ron immediately.

"Harry!" said Hermione to him. "Say something!"

"Yeah mate we need your opinion here!"

"Guys... grow up!" he said as he stood up and snatched Sirius' cup of coffee. He ignored his loud protests and took a small sip before he sat down next to him.

"What's wrong kiddo?" asked his godfather. "Why did you leave Ron and Hermione and join such an old dog like me?"

Harry chuckled softly. "They are arguing again and I had the great pleasure to sit in the middle of those two."

"I feel for you," said Sirius and snatched his coffee back out of Harry's hands.

Harry rolled his eyes and leaned back in his chair. His eyes drifted through the room to Fred and George who was whispering in hushed tones near the door and then to Mrs. Weasley who looked at them with an eagle's eye. Lastly his eyes fell on the youngest member of the Weasley family who sat next to her mother not far from him.

He raised his hand and ruffled his hair when Ginny looked at him from the other side of the table. She blushed and looked down at her nearly empty plate. When she looked up again Harry raised his eyebrows and smirked slightly before he winked at her. That of course just caused her to blush again. He could feel Sirius' eyes on him and looked at him questioningly.

"You know..." said Sirius with a faraway look in his eyes. "Sometimes you remind me so much of James... its scary!"

"How so?" asked Harry. He was often compared to his father in looks, that he could understand, but now... he didn't really get what Sirius meant.

"Last year I would have said that you act very much like Lily but now...somehow you became a little bit more like James over the past four weeks. Of course it was a year for you but still," answered Sirius. "You move just like him and are quite a Lady's Man it seems."



Harry grinned. "Padfoot, Padfoot... you don't know what you are talking about. Did my father really hang out with the prince of the Slytherin house?"

Sirius chuckled. "No. I certainly wouldn't have been his friend then. The leader of Slytherin during my time at Hogwarts was Lucius Malfoy."

Harry wrinkled his nose. "Figures."

"Tell me. How was your summer with Cissy and her son?" asked Sirius. "I can tell you I nearly fainted when Dumbledore told me and Remus yesterday that you were at their manor in France."

"Quite eventful actually," said Harry and looked at Dumbledore who was listening too now. "We were not only in France but often in Diagon Alley. Heck we were even in Egypt and Romania!"

"What did you do there?" asked Dumbledore and Sirius looked at Harry curiously.

"Getting roasted by a breeding dragon, chased by an angry chimera and nearly buried alive in a pyramid's grave chamber," answered Harry.

"You were at the Dragon Reserve in Romania then?" asked Sirius.

Harry nodded. "Yeah... I wanted to meet the little Hungarian Horntail that nearly skinned me alive in the first task again."

Sirius snorted when he called the dragon 'little' and looked at Dumbledore who smiled and opened his mouth.

"Before you even ask Professor," interrupted Harry. "Yes, we also talked to Charlie Weasley. We wanted to learn more about magical creatures and he was the best choice. I suggested Hagrid at first but... no offence, Sir... he would have told you right away that I wasn't at my relatives' house."

"It's quite alright, my boy," said Dumbledore. "I see that it probably was the best choice. And I assume that when you were in Egypt you met William Weasley then?"

"Hell yeah!" said Harry grinning. "Who would have been better to ask about Ancient Runes and Arithmancy than a Curse Breaker? And I can tell you I got plenty of real live experience there."

"I can imagine that," said Sirius and laughed loudly. "Were you really chased by a chimera?"

"Yup. Draco was really pissed after Bill dumped us in the grave chamber and fired curses everywhere. That of course wasn't a very good idea because the hallway collapsed and blocked the way. I'm sure you know how chimeras act around a veela. Fleur was there too. So... yeah..."

Sirius whistled. "That thing must have been raging and running through the walls!"

"But it spared us from digging our way out," grinned Harry and slowly nicked Sirius' cup again. "And by the way. Bill and Charlie know that we were jumping around in time. They both joined us for maybe two weeks or more."

"And how are your relations with Mrs. Malfoy and young Mr. Malfoy now?" asked Dumbledore quietly with that twinkle in his eyes.

"Mrs. Malfoy is a very nice person. She really reminds me of Mrs. Weasley sometimes," answered Harry smiling. "She was always fussing over me in the beginning and telling me to eat more. She also told me a lot about herself and how she was forced to marry Lucius after her older sister married a muggle."

"Ah. That was my dear cousin Andromeda who married Ted Tonks," said Sirius. "I think you will see their daughter Nymphadora soon. But don't call her that. She prefers it to be called 'Tonks'..."

"I feel for her," said Harry and Sirius realized that his coffee was no longer in front of him. "I would do the same if I was called 'Nymphadora' if I'm honest."

"And what about Mr. Malfoy?" asked Dumbledore while Sirius was ringing for his cup that Harry held out of his reach.

Harry gave Sirius the cup and looked at Dumbledore with slightly narrowed eyes. "Professor, with all due respect but I already told you how Draco and I became friends. Sure we had a very short truce at the end of third year, but out of that, I told you what you have to know."

Dumbledore looked at his fingers and nodded as Harry continued. "If you want to know which side they are on then I can tell you... no! I can even swear by my life that they are on the light side."

Suddenly they heard the familiar screaming of Mrs. Black's portrait and all looked towards the door. Harry blinked when several people entered the kitchen.

One was a tall woman with bright pink hair and a sheepish grin on her face. Harry immediately recognized her from Narcissa's memories as Tonks. But then she had been much younger, maybe eleven or twelve years old. He saw that she really had grown to be quite a looker.

Then some people Harry hadn't met before followed behind. One was a tall black man with a blue cloak, then a slightly chubby woman with short brown hair followed by a small man with a big silk-hat. After them came two men that made Harry smile.

One was Severus Snape and the other was Alastor 'Mad Eye' Moody. Harry chuckled. If you looked at it in another way he could be considered a Hogwarts' Professor that had the shortest teaching career in history. He had been there all year, but had actually only taught one lesson on the last day of the term.

Harry's eyes widened as Moody's eyes flashed in his direction and he could see that he had drawn his wand under his robes. Harry jumped

up and fired a quick Expelliarmus at him before he could even throw a curse or jinx.

Tonks toppled to the side and landed on her butt when the curse brushed her shoulder and Harry snatched Moody's wand out of the air. He twirled it in his fingers and let his own wand disappear into his invisible holster.

Moody's eyebrows nearly vanished into his hair and he laughed roughly. "Very good lad!"

"CONSTANT VIGILANCE!" bellowed Harry grinning, and the other people in the kitchen started to laugh at Moody's surprised expression.

Harry didn't wait for a response and gave him back his wand before he turned to Tonks.

He held her his hand out. "My sincere apologies. It was not my intention to hurt such a breathtakingly beautiful lady. I hope you can forgive me."

The room grew silent in an instant as Harry helped the blushing Tonks to her feet. He looked around and saw the Weasleys gaping at him. Sirius and Remus were grinning broadly.

"What?" asked Harry loudly. "I was just being polite!"

"Thank you," murmured Tonks and dusted her robes off. "I'm Tonks by the way."

Harry smiled and raised her hand to his lips while looking deep into her grey eyes. "The name's Harry. It's a pleasure to meet you Tonks."

She nodded and Harry saw that her face resembled a tomato. He smirked slightly and then looked questioningly at Dumbledore. The Professor looked back and when more people Harry didn't know entered the room he mouthed 'Order meeting' in his direction.

Harry nodded and turned back to Tonks and gave her a dazzling smile.

"I'm afraid I have to get going," he said and bowed. "It seems that a meeting is going to be held here that I'm not allowed to take part in. It was an honor to make your acquaintance."

Tonks just nodded and quickly went to a free chair. Harry followed her with his eyes and winked at Ginny again while he was at it.

He looked over to Ron, Fred and George who were arguing with their mother to stay in the kitchen. He shook his head and climbed the stairs up to the hallway where Mrs. Black was still screeching. He sighed and rubbed his temples.

"Lady Black! Please stop that unnecessary screaming! It's highly inappropriate for a person of your status."

She stopped screaming and threw him a slightly angry look before she pouted and the curtains closed.

"AND I WANT IT TO BE CLEAN BEFORE DINNER!" Harry heard Mrs. Weasley scream and jumped into the air. "ASK HARRY TO HELP YOU!"

His eyes widened when four Weasleys and Hermione came running up the stairs breathing heavily. He groaned inwardly. Couldn't they just stay away from Mrs. Weasley's temper?

Fred and George were already hurrying up the stairs with Ginny on their heels. Ron grabbed Harry's shirt and dragged Harry behind him. He struggled a bit, then sighed and started a casual conversation with a giggling Hermione.

"You know you are really cute when you giggle like that," he said as Ron finally managed to get him onto the second floor.

Hermione blinked and hit him softly over the head. "Harry! Stop being such a flirt!"

"But 'Mione!" he whined and rubbed his head when Ron finally released him. "I'm just telling the truth! I can't help it that you look like a goddess!"

"What is wrong with you Harry?" she asked in a low whisper as Ron looked at them strangely. "You are acting like a complete moron! Did you hit your head or something?"

Harry pouted. "No... I just can't help it 'Mione. It's my duty to tell the truth about the people I see. Especially when it's you."

"Don't you mean any girl you see?" she asked with narrowed eyes.

He put his hand dramatically over his chest and looked at her with puppy dog eyes. "I'm wounded! Is that really what you think of me?"

Hermione rolled her eyes but a small smile played on her lips. Suddenly Harry jumped backwards when a skin colored string dangled in front of him.

"What the heck?!"

So that was the fourth chapter.

Please Review and look at the Poll in my profile!!!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 5

Harry jumped backwards and looked at the skin colored string slightly open mouthed. He looked up and could see Fred and George, together with Ginny standing one floor above them, snickering as they looked at his face.

"What in the name of devil's snare is that?" he asked.

"Come up here and see for yourself," whispered Fred.

Harry looked at Ron and Hermione who were both smiling and shrugged before he went up the stairs, his two friends following. He then realized that Fred, George and Ginny all had one of the strings in their hands and held them to up to their ears. George seemed to be looking through his pockets and took out another one.

"Here, these are Extendable Ears;" he said and gave it to Harry.

He stared at them like they had gone nuts and took it hesitantly. George gave Ron and Hermione one too and then seemed to concentrate intently while holing the string to his ear. Ron followed suit and frowned

Harry looked at Hermione who also stood there and didn't make any attempt to use the 'Extendable Ear'.

"Ah... 'Mione? Care to explain?"

Hermione sighed and dropped her string on Fred's shoulder. "Those things make the listener able to eavesdrop on conversations they aren't supposed to hear." she looked at the others pointedly as she said that last part. "Fred and George came up with them. At first I wanted to listen too, but with Moody in there..."

Harry nodded and took a few steps back from the railing. "So they do this often? Listening to the Order meetings?"

"Yeah," answered Hermione and eyed him questioningly. "I thought that you especially would want to know what's going on."

"Naw...", said Harry and shook his head. "I'm curious that's all. But risking it to be caught by Moody or Mrs. Weasley? No, thank you! And also, when they want us to know what's going on they will let us stay in the kitchen."

Hermione looked at him and smiled softly. "It seems that you have grown up a bit. And not just physically."

"Gee thanks 'Mione. I'm honored," said Harry but smiled nonetheless. He looked at the string he was still holding in his hand and draped it on Fred's shoulder. "I think I can guess what they are talking about anyway. Why else would Snape be here if not for giving his report on Voldemort?"

"It's Snape!" interrupted Ginny quietly. "He's talking about... some known Death Eaters and what they are doing at the moment!"

Hermione looked at Harry astonished. He grinned. "See? What did I just say?"

She shook her head. "You are unbelievable."

"And proud of it!" Harry grinned back. "What was Mrs. Weasley screaming about when you came running from the kitchen? I just heard something about... cleaning?"

"Yes. As you can see the house looks a little bit like the Shrieking Shack and according to Sirius, there are many dark objects that have to be removed. Mrs. Weasley sent us to clean the salon on the second floor."

Harry looked down and smirked. "Oh? And why are we on the third floor then?"

Hermione just rolled her eyes and leaned against the railing. Fred, George, Ron and Ginny still were listening with their Extendable Ears and all wore an expression like they were watching the most interesting movie in the world.



Harry scoffed softly and shot one last smile to Hermione before he went down the stairs again and made his way to the salon. He remembered how it had looked like when Mrs. Malfoy had been here the last time and wrinkled his nose as he saw the damage that had been done in here.

You could no longer see the shiny ebony floor, and the green and silver carpet was hidden under tons of dust. He looked to his left where a big tapestry was hanging and then to the right where some cupboards, glass cabinets and a number of extravagant chairs and a large table stood. He had known that the house would be in bad shape but he hadn't expected it to look like shit. And it really did in his opinion.

He quickly closed the door behind him and took out his wand. With a little flick some of the dust vanished and you could see the wooden floor again. With a second flick the carpet was visible once more. He sighed when he remembered that he couldn't clean the room all at once because the others would arrive here shortly. And he surely didn't want to answer as to how he was able to clean this fast without magic.

He grudgingly put his wand back into its holster and went to the cabinet. Harry looked at several medals and awards that were presented there and also saw an Order of Merlin Third Class. Some very expensive looking goblets were in there as well and Harry could swear that most of them were at least a hundred years old.

He started to open one of the cabinets when suddenly loud banging could be heard from the hallway. Harry quickly conjured a mop and a bucket of water and pretended to be cleaning the floor. The door crashed open and Harry winced and rubbed his ears.

The Weasleys and Hermione were strolling into the room and looked around with disgusted looks on their faces. Only Hermione was looking at the floor with a raised eyebrow and then looked – what a surprise – straight at Harry.

"Why do we have to clean?" Ron angrily wanted to know. "I mean, mum would just need a swish of her wand and everything would be done!"

"Honestly Ronald! A bit of physical activity has never killed anyone," huffed Hermione.

"Yeah, Ronnikins," said Fred mockingly. "You of all people could use it."

Ron's ears turned red and he smacked Fred's shoulder who then promptly tackled him to the floor.

Ginny looked around and Harry grinned slightly when a blush made its way onto her face as she caught his eye.

"But how are we supposed to do this?" she wanted to know and looked at her brothers and Hermione.

Harry casually leaned on the mop in his hands. "How about with dusters and mops? You could use your hands or clothes of course, but that would be a bit awkward, wouldn't it?"

"Ha, ha, Mr. Obvious," said Hermione. "As if I don't know that."

Harry shrugged and flashed her a smile. "I wasn't talking about you 'Mione. I know that you know how to clean something without magic. How could you not? You are the most brilliant girl of your age. But it seems that our favorite redheads don't have a clue."

"I'm going to get the stuff we need," said Ginny quickly and stormed out of the room.

Harry shook his head and looked at Ron who was still wrestling with Fred on the floor. He put the mop back into the bucket and folded his arms.

"I cleaned the floor," he smirked. "You do the rest. Have fun!"

He dashed out of the room before the others could get what he had said and went down the stairs that led to the main hallway.

“HARRY JAMES POTTER!” was heard from Hermione when she got what he had said.

He grinned and held a finger to his mouth when Mrs. Black’s curtains opened. He looked sternly at her and she closed her mouth. He smiled and bowed formally when the curtains closed again.

“So where was this library Mrs. Malfoy spoke of...,” he murmured to himself and looked around.

He stopped when he saw a candlestick on the wall that looked different than the others, right next to Mrs. Black’s portrait.

“There you are!” he smiled and took a few steps towards it and frowned. “Now something like the Marauders’ Map would come in handy...”

He touched the wall in different spots near the candlestick and suddenly found a small hole right under it. Harry looked over his shoulder and took out his wand. It fit into the hole perfectly and a loud clicking noise was heard when he turned it like a key.

He stepped back when a door appeared before him and smirked. “That is something worthy of an ‘Indiana Jones’ movie.”

With one last look over his shoulder he slipped into the room he knew was behind the door and with another clicking noise the door had sealed itself again.

It was totally dark in the room and he murmured a quick ‘Lumos’ to change that. What he saw next was exactly what he remembered from Mrs. Malfoy’s memories. He stood in a big room that was full of bookshelves stacked with an abundance of papers, books and numerous other things.

He smiled triumphantly and went to one of the bookshelves. He whistled when he saw which books were displayed there and once

again the Black family held to its reputation. Every single book and object in this room was classified 'dark' by the Ministry as far as he knew. There were books about Necromancy, Torture, Rituals and the purest of the Dark Arts.

"And they ask why there are dark wizards?" asked Harry loudly. "No wonder with all this things written down."

"Very well observed," said a voice behind Harry and he jumped.

In an instant he had his wand drawn and whirled around to stand face to face with a... ghost?

"Who are you?" he asked baffled and lowered his wand.

The ghost in front of him reminded him strangely of Sirius. He was good looking and had short hair which he guessed was black when he had been alive. He had very aristocratic features and carried himself proudly and confidently. He wore a little old fashioned wizard's robe with expensive clothes underneath.

The ghost smirked and bowed slightly. "My name is Regulus Black."

Harry's eyes widened comically. "Of course! You are Sirius' younger brother!"

The ghost seemed to be taken aback and nodded briskly. "Indeed I am. How do you know about that?"

"Mrs. Malfoy told me that he had a brother," answered Harry and frowned when the ghost's... well body, seemed to stiffen.

"You... know the Malfoys?" Regulus sneered. "And associate with them? Then you must be one of those bigoted idiots that allied themselves with Voldemort as well, I suppose?"

Harry looked at him strangely. "I thought you were the Death Eater here! And yet you accuse me of being one of those bigoted idiots? How could I ally myself with Voldemort? He's wanted to kill me since I was born!"

"Then you are Harry Potter?" asked the ghost of Regulus astonished as his eyes flickered to Harry's forehead.

Harry just nodded and raised his eyebrows questioningly when Regulus seemed to be far away in lala-land all of sudden.

"Someone in there?" Harry asked and waved his hands in front of the ghost's face.

Regulus blinked and cleared his throat. "Well... it's rather surprising to see you in this house. My dear mother must have grown old. But on the other hand you know the Malfoys, so..."

"Your mother is dead. How is it that you don't know that when you are here?" said Harry surprised. "And I was with Draco and his mother for most of the holidays. She and Lucius are divorced now and Draco asked me for help."

Regulus' face brightened. "So Cissy finally woke up, did she? That's good... oh! And I didn't know that my mother is deceased. I'm bonded to this room only and can't leave it. I arranged it myself unintentionally before I died."

"Ah," said Harry. "Um... why exactly are you here? I mean... no offence but I know that you were a Death Eater when you were alive."

Regulus chuckled. "Very good. And do you also know why I'm dead now?"

Harry shook his head but then his eyes widened. "Of course! Mr. Malfoy said that you were killed because you betrayed Voldemort!"

"Exactly," nodded Regulus. "I found out something about him that he didn't want anybody to know. So he ordered his followers to kill me. I was heavily injured and knew that I hadn't much longer to live. But I made it into this house with a valuable object of his and hid it. I came down here and performed a ritual that bonded me to this house, but it went wrong and now I'm only bonded to this hidden library."

"When was that?" asked Harry.

"I was killed in 1984." (I know it's not like in the canon, where he died before but hey... it's a fanfiction.)

"What was this object you stole from Voldemort?" Harry wanted to know.

Regulus looked at him and then shook his head. "I'm sorry, but I don't trust you enough yet to give you this information. It's suspicious that you have contact with the Malfoys and I don't know if what you say about Cissy is true."

Harry sighed. "I understand."

Silence filled the room again and Harry saw that the ghost of Regulus seemed to debate something with himself.

"When you've figure out your question, go ahead," urged Harry in a friendly tone.

Regulus looked at him. "Well... I... I would like to know how Sirius is. I know that you are likely not in good terms with him because of your parent's death and the fact that he is in Azkaban, but... is he still alive?"

Harry laughed. "He was innocent to begin with. Peter Pettigrew was my parents' Secret-Keeper and tricked Sirius. He escaped Azkaban two years ago and is still on the run."

"H-he escaped Azkaban?!" choked Regulus with wide eyes. "H-how?"

Harry smirked slightly. "He's an unregistered animagus. A dog to be exact."

Regulus laughed loudly. "That fits! Sirius is the dog star my brother is named after and his animagus form is a dog." He sombered up again. "And you say he is on the run? Is he alright?"

"Yeah," said Harry. "He looks very healthy and seems to be just like he was when he was younger, when I can believe the stories about him and the Marauders. He's here in fact. This house is now the Headquarters of the Order of the Phoenix."

"Sirius is here? And Headquarters of the Order of the Phoenix? Damn... my ancestors must be rolling in their graves!"

Harry chuckled. "Probably. Do you... do you want to see him?"

"Sirius? Well I... I guess so. I want to tell him the truth but... I still need some time."

"Very well," said Harry and looked around the room again. "Does he know of this room?"

Regulus shook his head. "No. Not as far as I know. Mother and father surely didn't tell him. Every member of the Black family is told about this hidden library when they come back from their first year at Hogwarts. Since Sirius was in Gryffindor... no, surely not."

Harry looked at his watch. "Damn... I've already been here for half an hour. I really have to go before somebody comes looking for me."

Regulus grinned. "Sneaked out, didn't you?"

Harry shrugged. "Something like that. I avoided cleaning the house by hand."

"But if I remember correctly, you are only fifteen. Or did the Ministry change the rules about underage magic?"

"A little bit. You are allowed to do magic outside of Hogwarts at sixteen now. And I had some nice trips through time. So I'm that age now," grinned Harry.

Regulus just shook his head smiling and Harry went back to the entrance.

"I'm not telling Sirius about you at the moment, but I will come back sometime," said Harry and opened the door with his wand and went back into the hallway.

Just as the door behind Harry disappeared again the kitchen door burst open and Mrs. Weasley appeared. She stopped when she saw him standing there.

"Oh, Harry dear. I was just coming to get you," she said and he could see that her smile was forced. "Some of the Order members want to talk to you."

"Of course," he said and made his way around her.

When he entered the kitchen all eyes turned to him. He could see that Professor McGonagall and Professor Flitwick were there now as well and he reckoned that they arrived by floo after he had left the kitchen. He also saw that most of the members were gone now and just a part of the Hogwarts staff, the last Marauders and Tonks were still there.

He saw that McGonagall was looking at him with wide eyes and grinned broadly at her before he winked and flopped himself down on a chair next to his godfather. The Professor huffed and looked at Dumbledore.

"Well Harry," began the headmaster. "I would like to know if I can tell those who don't know what you did over the holidays so far."

Harry looked at the other Professors and Tonks and then back to Dumbledore. "Professor, you may as well tell them but with one condition."

"Yes?"

"I want to know what Voldemort is looking for at the Ministry."

Shocked silence met his statement and he knew that he had totally thrown them off guard. Tonks' hair changed into an alarming shade of white just like her face. Sirius and Remus just looked at him and



Flitwick and McGonagall were looking at Dumbledore who had gone a little pale. Lastly Harry looked at Snape who looked at him with a raised eyebrow and he raised one in return. He could have sworn a small smirk made its way onto the potions Professor's face, but dismissed it.

"Well... you see Harry... this is nothing that should be discussed at the moment," said Dumbledore uncomfortably.

"Very well then," said Harry coldly. "Then you shall not tell them until I see it fit to do so. You know... I placed a spell on you that makes you unable to tell someone without my permission so don't even try it when I'm out of the room."

"Mr. Potter!" said McGonagall loudly. "You can't just go around and do magic on the people around you! Just let him tell us or tell it yourself! It could be important."

"My apologies Professor," said Harry in the same tone than before. "But I don't see why I have to tell everyone what's going on in my life when you people withhold information from me. You, just like everyone present in this room, know that Voldemort is after me and I need every bit of information concerning him as much as you do."

"He's looking for something he didn't have in the first war.", said Sirius suddenly.

"Sirius!" chided Mrs. Weasley who entered the kitchen just now. "He's too young!"

"Nonsense," scoffed Sirius. "He's right. He has a right to know what's going on."

Mrs. Weasley glared at him. "He is still a child! And-"

"And I have faced Voldemort more times than you could ever hope to," interrupted Harry and gave her a pointed look.

"But I'm responsible for you!" said Mrs. Weasley. "If I don't care for you who else will?"

Sirius stood up and his chair crashed to the floor. "I care! I'm his godfather Molly and therefore he is under my care! You know that!"

"But you are-"

"I'm what?!" spat Sirius angrily. "An insane guy from Azkaban? A reckless idiot? A convicted murderer on the run? Don't you dare bring that up!"

"You aren't fit to care for him," said Mrs. Weasley sternly. "You have your own issues so you don't have the time to care for a child! I was always there for him!"

"YOU-", began Sirius but Harry interrupted him when the glasses on the table burst into thousands of pieces.

Everyone looked at him wide-eyed when he slowly rose to his feet and turned around to face Mrs. Weasley. The temperature in the room suddenly seemed to drop.

"Mrs. Weasley...", he said quietly but with steel in his voice. "Don't even start to finish this argument."

"But I-"

"I don't want to hear it!" Harry seethed. "You don't have the right to decide what I do and for that matter, what someone tells me! Your family took me in and you, like everyone else, treated me like one of your family, and I respected you for that," he glared at her. "But you have just lost some of that respect! How dare you insult Sirius in front of me? Who are you to pass yourself off as my mother?"

"Harry I...", began Mrs. Weasley shocked.

"NO," said Harry who had now entirely lost his cool. "I don't care what you have to say! MY PARENTS ARE DEAD! DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?!"

He took a deep breath. "I don't need someone to fuss over me and try to shield me from harm! I need someone who supports me and my decisions. Someone who stands behind me and can give me advise when I need it. Someone like Sirius, or even Remus. I say it again: YOU ARE NOT MY MOTHER!"

The room was deadly silent when Harry finished and everybody looked at Mrs. Weasley who looked shell-shocked and seemed to be fighting with herself.

"I... I'm sorry Harry...", she said after a while but didn't look him in the eye. "I... I didn't want to replace your mother. I... it's just..."

Harry sighed, rubbed his head and sat down again. "Mrs. Weasley... I can understand that you want to protect me and I'm sorry for my outburst... but you must understand that I grew up without a family and never had someone who tried to control me - not that it would have ever done any good," he chuckled and the tense atmosphere in the room lessened. "I just don't want you to ever talk to Sirius like that again. It's not his fault that he was in Azkaban. You have to blame Pettigrew for that."

He smiled slightly when Mrs. Weasley nodded after a short while and went to the stove to make lunch.

"So Harry... what Sirius said before...", said Dumbledore as he cleared his throat. "He's right. Voldemort is looking for something he didn't have in the first war."

"Something he didn't have in the first war...", Harry needed some time to clear his thoughts and nodded. "Like a weapon?"

"Yeah...", said Sirius who had also calmed down now. "You could say that. A weapon... that could decide the outcome of his plan."

"What's this weapon?"

Dumbledore shook his head. "I'm sorry Harry, but that's something we won't tell you until you are older."

Harry threw him a look that clearly said. 'I'm sixteen and an adult for Merlin's sake! You know that!'

A small smile played on Dumbledore's lips. "At least we won't tell you while you still attend Hogwarts."

"Are you serious?" asked Harry disbelieving.

"No, that's me!" quipped his godfather and Remus hit him over the head.

Harry ignored him. "You won't tell me for three years? What if Voldemort is able to gain access to this... weapon? What if he uses it against us?"

Dumbledore shook his head. "I'm sorry but this is all you will get for now."

Harry ruffled his hair in defeat and leaned back in his chair. "Very well. You may tell them where I was and what I did but not for how long."

Dumbledore nodded and told the other people in the room where Harry had been staying. McGonagall sometimes threw him disbelieving looks and so did Tonks and Flitwick. Snape on the other hand smirked slightly and Harry stood up to stand next to him in the shadows.

"Aren't you excited about the re-sorting, Sir?" he asked him.

Snape looked sternly at him. "I must say that was... a very Slytherin move of you before... but still. I doubt that you and your foolish Gryffindor bravery would end up in my house Mr. Potter."

Harry shrugged. "Not that I really care. Hogwarts is Hogwarts. It's not really important which house you are in. I just bet that the press will make my life a living hell if I end up in another house than Gryffindor."

"Probably," answered Snape when Dumbledore finished his explanation.

"Mr. Potter?" asked McGonagall. "Did I hear right, you want to change classes?"

Harry left the shadows and nodded. "I want to drop Divination. That subject is just utter rubbish and I'm tired of Trelawney predicting my death every five minutes."

She snorted. "Very well then. I will speak to Bathsheba and Septima. You will probably have to do a test to see if you are fit to be in their classes this year."

"Thanks Professor," said Harry and flashed her a bright smile.

"Now that that is settled," stated Dumbledore. "Sirius I would like you to go meet Narcissa Malfoy in the next few days and ask her if she wants to join the Order."

Sirius nodded. "I wanted to go anyways, even if just to restore her status as a Black."

Dumbledore's eyes twinkled again over his half moon spectacles and he looked at Harry. "I understand that you learned Occlumency and were able to throw me out of your mind, but are your shields steady?"

Harry rolled his eyes. "Professor you have seen my form. You know as well as I do that nothing can shatter the shields of that creature."

Professor McGonagall's head snapped in his direction and he could have sworn that he heard a crack in her neck. "Form? Mr. Potter don't tell me that you are an animagus, please!"

Harry smirked. "Indeed I am Professor."

She sighed pitifully and rested her head in her hands. "We're doomed..."

"Now now Minerva!" said Dumbledore and soothingly rubbed her back while the last Marauders chuckled. "I'm sure you know that James was an animagus too and did no harm."

"But that's the problem!" the Professor countered. "He was an animagus and the biggest troublemaker I ever met!"

"Hey!" interrupted Sirius pouting. "What about me?"

"And the Weasley twins?" quipped Harry.

McGonagall didn't answer, just buried her head in her hands again. Tonks chuckled and Harry looked over at her. He had totally forgotten that she was there.

"Tell me Tonks... how old are you anyway?"

Tonks blushed. "I'm twenty now and fresh out of the Auror Academy."

"So you're an Auror?" Harry asked surprised.

Tonks nodded. "Yeah. But I nearly failed one of the tests. I can be dead clumsy at times and I'm not very good at stealth. But I countered that with transfiguration."

"So you're good in that subject?"

"Jep," Tonks smiled. "I'm a Metamorphmagus so I can change my appearance at will. That's what saved me from failing."

"Yeah... I saw that when your hair changed color," said Harry and unbeknownst to the others, changed a small strand of his jet-black hair to red for only her to see.

Her eyes widened and then she smiled at him. Harry didn't listen to the other people in the room any longer, but felt Sirius' and Remus' eyes on him.

"So... wait a moment! You were at Hogwarts!" said Harry suddenly.

Tonks looked at him oddly. "Of course I was. Every wizard or witch in Britain went to Hogwarts at some time."

Harry shook his head. "No. You were there when I started school!"

"Yeah!" answered Tonks grinning. "And you were one ugly little boy, let me tell you. I was in fifth year then."

Harry grinned as well. "So, you were that damn hot Ravenclaw girl back then! I always wondered who that was." Tonks blushed and he smirked. "Well, I was ugly then, what am I now?"

Tonks blush deepened and her hair changed into a deep red before she started to sputter some incoherent words.

"That was a good!" laughed Sirius and Remus chuckled.

"What can I say," grinned Harry. "I'm the best!"

"Jerk!" said Tonks and started to sputter again when Harry threw a kiss in her direction.

Suddenly he heard a gasp and looked at Snape who was clutching his right arm in pain.

"He's calling," the Professor just said and gritted his teeth. "Excuse me."

Dumbledore nodded and Snape stormed out of the kitchen and everyone heard the front door closing upstairs.

Harry looked at the others and raised his eyebrows. "When is somebody going to tell me officially that Snape is a spy for the Order and has the Dark Mark?"

The people in the room just dropped their jaws.

So that was the fifth chapter. I hope you liked it!

Review and tell me your opinion!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 6

Harry had been staying at Grimmauld Place for a little over two weeks now and he couldn't say that it was boring. Oh, surely not. With Sirius, Remus and the twins in the house, that was absolutely not possible. He remembered very well why this was the case...

### Flashback

"Harry...", said Fred quietly when they were going through the cabinets in the salon after the rest of the room had been cleaned spotless. "George and I wanted to thank you again. You know... for the money you gave us."

Harry grinned and looked to see if Mrs. Weasley was somewhere near them, but she was looking at the curtains on the other side of the room. "I hope you put it to good use?"

Now George's head popped up beside his twin. "Of course! We have already started to set up some things we want to test this year at Hogwarts."

"Well then, I hope you do something worthy of your reputation," smirked Harry who looked disgusted at the small rat's skeleton he had fished out from under the cabinet.

"Hell yeah!" they chorused. "We'll do something worthy of the Marauders!"

Sirius entered the room and looked over Harry's shoulder at the rat's skeleton. "What did Mr. Padfoot hear Mr. Shadow? Did someone mention the Marauders?"

Harry looked up. "Why Mr. Padfoot, Mr. Shadow thinks you are right. These two redheads said something about us I believe."

"Then Mr. Padfoot thinks he may have to warn Mr. Moony. Just in case."



"Mr. Shadow thinks that this may be a good idea Mr. Padfoot," answered Harry and looked at the twins who were both gaping at him and Sirius.

Sirius raised an eyebrow when they began to tremble. Harry smirked at what happened next.

"We are not worthy!" they screamed and threw themselves on the floor at Sirius' feet.

"Oh great Prankster and Marauder! Please..."

"... teach us your ways of mischief!"

Sirius chuckled with a dangerous glint in his eyes. "Ohh... that I can do..."

End Flashback

That had been three days ago and Harry could swear that the house had never been this colorful before. After the twins had found out that they were living with two of the original Marauders and one new Marauder, they had asked for a prank war.

And a war is what they got.

Harry had decided to only observe the first day, but on the second day, after being on the receiving end of one of the twins' pranks; having to spend the entire day with a lion's tail and dog ears; he had lost his temper.

Together with Sirius and Remus, he had planned his prank to get back at them, and the twins would surely never forget it. That's because they were still running around with green skin with a toy snake draped around their necks. Harry had made sure that it would last at least a week. Their screams had echoed throughout the whole house when they woke that morning to find themselves in an exact replica of the Slytherin common room at Hogwarts.

Harry chuckled and stroked Hedwig who was sitting on his shoulder and looking at him.

At the moment he was busy reading a letter that he had received from Draco after breakfast.

Dear Harry,

How are you? I'm fine at the moment and I can tell you that mother was overjoyed when she received a letter from Sirius telling her that he would like to meet with her.

I hope you will be accompanying him; maybe you can also pick up Fleur then. She told me that she starts working at Gringotts the day after tomorrow.

How are the weasels faring? Oops... sorry, I mean Weasleys of course. And Granger for that matter?

Mother said that you had been in the hidden Black library. Is there anything useful in there?

Well I hope I see you soon, and by the way... did you find out how to flash? I'm already able to transport myself in my form.

D.

Harry groaned when he read the last line and hung his head in disappointment. He had been trying to get flashing down since he had perfected his animagus transformation, but still couldn't get it. He hadn't thought that it would be this hard after how easily he had learned how to apparate.

It irked him to no end that he was able to apparate but couldn't use it when he wanted to. Sure, he had apparated in France, but there were totally different rules there regarding such things. That he wasn't able to do it here was something the British Ministry had made sure of. You needed to have a license because illegal apparation was recorded immediately. So he had been ecstatic when he found out that he could change into a Phoenix, but even then he had to adjust

to his new body. He remembered that it had taken him a whole day just to jump around like a crazed rabbit instead of flying.

He sighed and left his room after sending Draco a quick reply, telling him that he would ask if he could accompany Sirius when he went.

He carefully stepped over a string that was in front of his door and jumped over the first stair that shimmered a bit when you took a closer look at it. He smirked when he heard a pair of disappointed groans from upstairs and looked up to see two mops of red hair disappearing behind the railing.

"Well... time to visit Regulus again and get his answer," said Harry to himself as he made his way down the stairs.

He quickly went down the hallway and opened the hidden door. The next instant he was in the room and looked around, but didn't see anybody.

"Mr. Black? Regulus?" he asked.

The ghost came floating through the bookshelves and smiled slightly at him. "I thought you wouldn't show up again," he greeted Harry.

Harry shrugged. "You said you needed time to think about your answer regarding Sirius and I didn't want to disturb your musings."

"How very nice of you Mr. Potter," Regulus drawled sarcastically. "Have you any idea how boring it is to be a ghost bonded to a single room?"

"Yeah, I can imagine," replied Harry smirking. "I'm always very polite, so well... sorry. And it's Harry, okay? Mr. Potter was my father."

"Only if you never, ever in your life call me 'Mr. Black' again... it reminds me too much of school," shuddered Regulus and Harry chuckled.

"Will do. And? What's your answer?"

"I...", Regulus hesitated. "I want to meet him."

Harry nodded. "I'll tell him. But you might have to wait a few days. At the moment every member of the house is totally engrossed in turning this place into a hospital."

"A hospital?" asked Regulus baffled.

Harry nodded. "Jup. Firstly, the hallway and the second floor are totally spotless and nearly every cabinet and every cupboard has been looked through already. Secondly, two members of the Order were injured when they got here and had to be treated here. So now it's a hospital."

"What did you do with the stuff that was in the cabinets?" asked Regulus who seemed to be uncomfortable.

Harry shrugged. "We threw it away. But we aren't finished in the salon yet. There are still two cabinets we have to go through."

Regulus nodded and really seemed to be on the edge. "I have to talk to my brother at the earliest opportunity."

"That can be arranged," a familiar voice behind Harry said coldly.

Harry turned around. "S-Sirius? How were you able to get in?"

"I could ask you the same thing Harry," his godfather said in an unusually stern voice and glared at Regulus. "I thought I'd gone nuts when you opened a secret door next to my dear mother's picture."

Harry cursed quietly under his breath. He hadn't checked to see if anybody had been watching him when he entered the hidden library. But he thanked god that it hadn't been someone else.

"Sirius," said Regulus quietly. "You haven't changed a bit brother."

"Neither have you," sneered Sirius sarcastically. It was an odd expression on his usually cheerful face. "But you are dead. How could you little brother?"

Regulus sighed and Harry looked back and forth between the two Black brothers when Sirius suddenly looked at him in anger.

"What business have you got with him?" he spat and pointed a finger at Regulus. "I told you when we were in front of the family tapestry yesterday that he was a Death Eater, didn't I? And now I find you chatting with him in a hidden library with books no one should ever be allowed to read!"

Harry held his hands up. "I met him even before that! The second day I was in the house I went into this room. I got the information from Mrs. Malfoy's memories. Regulus suddenly popped up and I talked to him for a little while." He sighed when he saw Sirius' glare directed at him now and not at his dead brother.

"I knew he was a Death Eater before, so don't start with that please."

"Harry...", said Sirius quietly. "What am I supposed to think about you now? First you disappear for four weeks and turn up with a story about the Malfoys being 'light' and now you are chatting with a Death Eater in a library for the dark arts."

Now it was Harry's turn to glare. "Do you mean you don't believe me?! You wrote to Mrs. Malfoy yourself! You know that it's true that I was at their manor in France!"

"You could have made up that story about her changing sides," said Sirius and his eyes hardened. "In order to give them a valuable information source about the measures being taken against their master. To get information from the light side and give it to Voldemort."

"YOU THINK I WOULD BETRAY MY FRIENDS TO VOLDEMORT?!" Harry screamed and whipped out his wand in rage. "YOU REALLY THINK SO?!"

Sirius took a step back and took out his own wand. "In times like these, anything is possible," he said but his voice was quivering

slightly. "He could have offered you something you couldn't refuse and..."

"Stop this Sirius!" interrupted Regulus loudly when Harry began to tremble in anger and clenched his wand so hard that his knuckles turned white.

"Offered me something I couldn't refuse?" repeated Harry, his voice as cold as ice as he looked at the floor. "Yeah... he could have done that. Do you know what I never would refuse in my life?"

Sirius said nothing but looked at Harry in panic when the air around them grew suddenly cold.

"TELL ME!" bellowed Harry and red sparks shoot out of his wand.

"I-I don't know," answered Sirius quietly.

"I would join Voldemort in an instant if he could offer me something I would never refuse," whispered Harry and Sirius looked mortified. "Have I ever told you about the Mirror of Erised?"

Sirius shook his head trembling and held his wand a little higher.

"That mirror shows you your deepest desire. It shows you a wish that comes deep from within your heart. Your greatest and deepest wish. Do you know what I saw in the mirror? Do you know which offer I would never refuse?"

He didn't wait for an answer. "I saw something I would never say 'no' to if somebody offered it to me. Not even if I had to join Voldemort to gain it. Any idea? No?"

"Harry... don't tell me that you really joined him to get your wish!" pleaded Sirius desperately and Regulus just sighed.

Harry broke out laughing, but it was a cold and empty laugh. "I'll tell you what I saw in this mirror," he threw him an icy cold look. "I saw my parents... alive and well. Smiling at me, laughing and caring for me..."

Sirius stood there petrified. "Harry I..."

"I'm not Peter Pettigrew," he interrupted calmly, but there was steel in his voice. "I would never betray my friends to the one who killed my parents. I would rather die than tell him anything. You of all people should know that Black!"

Sirius flinched and his wand fell onto the carpeted floor with a loud 'thud' as he buried his face in his hands.

"Very insightful Sirius," said Regulus drily. "Really well done."

"Shut up!" he snapped. "This is all your fault!"

"No, it's not!" Harry threw in. "Regulus may have been a Death Eater, but he was killed because he betrayed Voldemort you damn mutt! He sacrificed his life just like my parents to get valuable information from Voldemort."

"You... you are right Harry. Please... please can you forgive me?" begged Sirius and sunk down on his knees. "I... I don't know what came over me... I... when I saw you here with Regulus I felt betrayed. I was afraid that I would lose you too. I was afraid you would do it just like Pettigrew and betray Remus and I... and everyone else for that matter. Please... forgive me!"

Harry sighed and leaned heavily against one of the bookshelves. "Sirius... you are the only family I have left... please don't destroy our relationship because of something like that. I can forgive you, but I will need time to forget what you said." He was silent as Sirius nodded. "It hurt you know? It really hurt that you would think I would change sides and go to Voldemort..."

"Damn!" said Regulus and shook his head. "You really haven't changed one bit Siri. You always act before you think. You really need to work on your social skills!"

"Is it true?" asked Sirius ignoring his jab. "Did you really betray Voldemort?"

Regulus sighed. "Aye... that I did. It wasn't one of my brightest ideas to join him in the first place."

Harry snorted and Regulus threw him a pointed look which he ignored.

Sirius grabbed his wand and stood up again. "Why should I believe you? There is no evidence that you weren't one of his followers."

"I... this isn't something I want to reveal in front of Mr. P- Harry," said Regulus quietly and Harry frowned angrily.

"Well...", said Sirius uncomfortably and looked at Harry. "I think it would be the best if he stays to listen..."

Regulus shook his head with finality. "No."

Harry looked at the younger Black and nodded briskly. "Very well. I will take my leave. I'll see you at lunch then Sirius."

His godfather nodded and Harry left the room. He looked at his watch and sighed. It was nearly time for lunch, but he wasn't really hungry at the moment. He thought back to the words that Sirius had said to him, and anger followed by guilt, overcame him.

He stormed up the stairs and opened and closed the door to his room with a loud bang that rang throughout the whole house. He let out a scream of frustration and punched the wall so that it cracked slightly. He tiredly leaned his head against his arms and sighed.

"Damn it all to hell!!!" he cursed. "What's wrong with me and the people around me?!"

"Er... Harry? Mate?" he heard the voice of Ron. "What's wrong with you? Did something happen?"

Harry whirled around, his eyes wide as he saw Ron and Hermione sitting on his bed looking at him. They both had concerned looks on their faces.



"What are you doing in my room?" he snapped more rudely than he had intended to.

"We... we were waiting for you," said Hermione. "We wanted to talk to you."

Harry rubbed his head. "About what? Couldn't it wait until lunch?"

"Well...", said Ron and squirmed uncomfortably. "About you actually... you've changed mate. And I mean it."

Harry rolled his eyes. "I thought we already covered that on my first day here?"

"Yeah... but I mean... like when you think no one is watching you for example," Ron said quickly and Harry narrowed his eyes. "Or when you are around Dumbledore or my mum and even Snape for that matter. You behave like someone... well... you often behave like Malfoy."

"What's your point?" asked Harry, already tired of this conversation.

"Harry. We're just concerned, that's all," said Hermione in an attempt to sooth him. "You're able to handle Mrs. Black like she is an old friend and some of those books you've got here in your room are about more than just dark magic."

"I'll ask you again," said Harry calmly. "What's your point? Have you been waiting for me just to tell me that you believe I'm turning dark? That I'm changing into a pure-blood idiot like those jerks that believe themselves superior to everyone else?"

"Yeah!" blurted Ron and Hermione's eyes widened. "You..."

"Shut up weasel!" sneered Harry and looked at him coldly. "I'm a half-blood myself you idiot!"

"See what I mean?!" asked Ron angrily. "He already talks like a junior Death Eater!"

"Ronald!" Hermione scolded him. "Are you insane?! How can you even think something like that? We just wanted to talk to him about it, and now you are accusing him of being a Death Eater?"

Harry just stood there unmoving; his arms crossed tightly as he glared at Ron.

The redhead stood up. "He doesn't tell us anything anymore! He is treating us like air most of the time! What am I supposed to think?"

"It might be that he is just annoyed at your childish behavior!" Hermione countered and looked at Harry. "Since he's been here, he has never ignored me."

"I want an answer now mate," said Ron who turned to him. "Are you planning something against us?" Suddenly he took a letter out of his pocket and held it in front of him. "What's this letter about? Is this one of your new Death Eater friends?"

Harry's eyes flashed dangerously and he took the letter out of Ron's hands. It must have arrived shortly after he had left for the hidden library. He carefully read it.

My dear Harry,

I'm concerned about our special connection. You know exactly what I mean.

But you also know that those foolish muggles and mudblood-lovers would never stand a chance against us.

So I'm asking you now, and I'm asking you just this once. Join me!

Come and stand by my side. Be my equal just like it should be. I know that I didn't make a very good first... well... second impression on you, but we have so much in common.

Yes... we both were dumped like trash on some muggles and had to take up with this scum for years. We both grew up without parents and we both are half-bloods.

And for both of us, one person is responsible for our miserable life. This person is Albus Dumbledore. So I ask you to join me and take revenge on that old fool.

Consider your answer and send a reply within the next week. I'm waiting for you.

Tom Marvolo Riddle.

Harry's eyes had widened further with every line, but when he read the name that was signed on the bottom of the letter, he gasped. This couldn't be, could it? Voldemort was writing him a letter? He was writing him a letter and wanted him to join him? Not just that, but he signed it with his real name and didn't deny the fact that he was a half-blood!

"And?" asked Ron angrily. "What have you to say for yourself? This is obviously from a Death Eater!"

Harry's thoughts raced. Didn't Ron know who Tom Riddle was? Had he already forgotten their second year when they had rescued his little sister Ginny from him?

But his eyes grew cold when he looked at his best friend. "I don't have to answer your foolish questions. I don't know what this letter is about."

"Fine!" spat Ron and tried to storm off, but Harry held out his hand and stopped him.

"Listen Ron! And listen well!" he said quietly. "I don't want you to ever look through my stuff again. Is that clear? What letters I get and what things I possess are none of your concern. If you value our friendship - and I tell you that I do - then you won't do this again. Is that clear?"

Ron glared at him but nodded before he stormed out of the room. He looked at Hermione from the corner of his eye.

"Harry... I swear I didn't know that he would say such silly things!"

He sat down on the bed next to her and sighed heavily. "It's exactly like last year when my name came out of the goblet. I don't know what's going on these days... I know that I have changed, but how is it that I end up arguing with everyone?"

"Yes," said Hermione quietly. "You have changed. But still... why did you punch the wall when you first came in the room?"

"I had an argument with Sirius before," he answered. "I seem to be getting into them a lot at the moment as you can see."

"I'm just happy that I'm not at the receiving end of your ward," said Hermione slightly smiling. "You are scary when you are angry."

Harry chuckled. "I could never be angry at you Mione. You never give me a reason to even try it."

"And what about third year?" she asked with a raised eyebrow. "I remember that you didn't talk to me for a month because of a stupid broomstick!"

"I was an immature git back then," he said and flashed her a smile. "No... really. About your concern... I would love to tell you what's going on, but I need time. I need to make sure that the people I tell the truth will accept it."

"I understand," said Hermione and looked at him as she stretched her limbs. "At the moment you are just an enigma to me..."

Harry didn't say anything because he was enchanted by her elegant movements and his eyes wandered lower to where long brown curls that reached her mid-back accented her curves. She snapped her fingers and he looked up again, smiling sheepishly.

“What am I going to do with you Harry James Potter,” said Hermione sighing.

“Give me a kiss?” he suggested grinning and dodged a pillow aimed at his head.

“Idiot!” Hermione scoffed.

“Love you too Mione,” he replied sarcastically.

Hermione threw a mild glare in his direction and he tried to hide behind his bed but lost his balance.

Hermione yelled in surprise when he landed painfully on top of her and she grimaced slightly under his weight.

“Get off of me!” said Hermione sternly as she struggled to be free.

“Hermione...,” whispered Harry, and she stopped struggling and looked at him questioningly.

He steadied himself on his elbows and adjusted his legs so that Hermione could freely move and stand up if she wanted to.

“I...,” his eyes traveled down to her lips and back to her chocolate brown orbs. “I meant what I said...”

“Harry... you...,” started Hermione but Harry silenced her with his finger.

“No Hermione... please don’t.”

She looked at him and her eyes softened as a blush made its way to her face. Harry’s finger trailed down her face and slipped into the soft brown curls at her nape. Hermione still looked at him unmoving and suddenly he felt a hand on his back. He looked at Hermione’s face again and could see that she had a slight green shimmer in her eyes that he hadn’t seen before. But on the other hand, he had never been this close to her face before.

"Please...", whispered Harry and looked deep into her eyes for any signs of anger or fright. "Kiss me. Just this once..."

He leaned down to her and when she made no attempt to move away, their lips softly met. Harry gently nibbled at her bottom lip and she opened her mouth ever so slightly... inviting him to continue. He smiled against her mouth and deepened the kiss. His hands glided through her hair and gently over her face. He felt her hands trailing up his spinal cord and resting in his wild mop of hair.

After nearly a minute he broke the kiss and drew back to look at her.

"I can't believe it...", Hermione said with a flushed face, breathing heavily and looking at him wide eyed. "I just kissed you!"

Harry chuckled softly. "Well yes. I believe you did Mione."

"I... I'm sorry!" she stammered and her face turned the shade of a tomato. "By Merlin... what have I done?"

"I liked it...", said Harry and caressed her face. "Quite a lot actually."

Hermione looked at his lips and then into his eyes. "I... I really liked it too. But Harry we... I mean... you are my best friend!"

He sighed quietly. "I don't know when it happened Mione... but somehow you became more than a best friend to me... I think it started during the first task of the tournament. And then when I saw you at the Yule Ball... I know it's not right but..."

"Harry?" Hermione asked quietly, hesitantly. "Can you... can you kiss me again?"

"With pleasure!" answered Harry and leaned down again.

Suddenly the door burst open and he heard a loud gasp. He whipped his head around and so did Hermione.

"WHAT IN THE NAME OF MERLIN IS GOING ON HERE?!"

I know... I'm evil. I'm leaving you with a cliffie.

But seriously, I'm Sirius here. I think you can guess who entered the room, can't you?

Don't forget the reviews!!!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 7

Harry and Hermione stared wide-eyed at a fuming Mrs. Weasley who stood in the doorway and had an expression of shock and anger on her face. Her entrance was all but ruined by the fact that she was covered in white paint from head to toe.

Hermione had her mouth slightly open at the sight and Harry guessed that the twins had once again installed a trap in front of his room.

Harry resisted the urge to smirk when he saw Remus lurking behind her and grinning at him like a cat that had caught the canary.

"WELL?!" demanded Mrs. Weasley angrily, her hands on her hips.

"What is it to you?" Harry asked rudely. "I hope you haven't already forgotten what I told you on my first day here."

"I... that... YOU!" she sputtered helplessly and Harry looked at Hermione who was still slightly wide-eyed but a small smile crept its way onto her face. "What are you doing here?!"

"Molly, I believe those two didn't want to be disturbed," said Remus who winked at them.

Hermione blushed and Harry decided to change his position. He stood up but his hand still rested on Hermione's shoulder as he looked at Mrs. Weasley. She looked back at him and then sighed.

"Very well, like you said... I won't tell you what to do..."

"That will be an improvement," answered Harry dryly.

"But I don't want you two children to be... snogging on every occasion you get. Is that clear?!"

Harry seemed to be thinking hard and Hermione, who seemed to have found her voice again, whacked him softly on the head. "Sorry Mrs. Weasley. We won't do that."



Harry pouted when Mrs. Weasley stormed out of the room and rubbed his head before he looked to Remus.

“Why did you two storm into the room anyway?” he asked.

Remus shrugged. “Lunch is ready. I wanted to get Padfoot but I can’t find him. And also... what did you do to Ron? He was seething when he arrived in the kitchen!”

Harry snorted and crossed his arms. “If he can’t accept that I’m not the same naïve and immature boy I was six weeks ago then I can’t help him.”

“Don’t you think it would be best if you told your friends?” asked Remus and Hermione looked at him curiously.

He shook his head. “No... I already told Hermione that I want to be sure that they accept the truth before I tell them. I think you can understand that.”

Remus nodded. “That I do.”

They stood in uncomfortable silence and Harry turned to Hermione. “Can you go on ahead to the kitchen? I have to ask Remus something in private.”

Hermione nodded hesitantly and he gave her a small kiss on the lips when she stood up. She gave him a quick hug in return.

When she reached the door she looked at him. “We have to talk about this... you know?”

He nodded and she smiled before she closed the door leaving him alone with Remus.

The Marauder looked at him in concern when Harry’s expression darkened. “What is it cub?”

Harry grabbed the letter that had been lying on the floor and showed it to him silently. Just as he did, Remus' eyes widened with every line and he went deathly pale when he saw the name.

"This... can't be...," he whispered and looked at him with wide eyes. "He... he wants you to join him?"

Harry nodded briskly. "I think he must be growing old if he thinks I would say yes."

"I think... I think it's best if you stay after lunch," said Remus and handed the letter back to him. "We have to speak to Albus about that."

"No," said Harry.

"What?"

Harry shook his head. "I won't tell Dumbledore. He doesn't tell me anything important, so I won't tell him about the letter. It won't make a difference anyway."

"But Harry, we're talking about Voldemort here!" said Remus frowning.

"Do you think I don't know that Moony?" asked Harry and took his wand out. "Swear me a wizard's oath that you won't tell Dumbledore."

Remus hesitated but then took out his own wand. "I, Remus John Lupin, hereby swear by my magic that I won't reveal anything what Harry James Potter has told and shown me."

Harry nodded. "I, Harry James Potter, accept the oath with exception of Sirius Orion Black, who may be told about it."

A spike of magic lit the room and vanished into the tips of their wands.

"You can tell Sirius... I don't want to keep too many secrets from him. He... he won't like it after what Pettigrew did."

Remus smiled slightly. "You are right cub. Let's go and have lunch."

Harry just nodded and followed Remus down into the kitchen. Every member of the Weasley family was already there, with the exception of Bill, Charlie and Percy, and he saw that Mr. Weasley was finally there too.

He had last seen him for a short time a week ago, when he came back from working at the Ministry. He looked at the redheads and saw that they all looked very somber and had angry expressions and that Mrs. Weasley was crying while Mr. Weasley patted her comfortingly on the back.

“Um...,” was all Harry could say before joining Hermione at the table but not before giving Ron, who sat next to her on the other side, a cold look. “What’s going on here?”

She shrugged her shoulders helplessly. “I don’t really know. But I think it has something to do with Percy.”

“That git said he doesn’t want anything to do with us!” spat Ron angrily.

Harry just raised his eyebrows and looked at Ginny who was sitting next to her mother. She sighed and decided to elaborate.

“He wrote a letter to dad today at work and said that he wouldn’t associate with us any longer because we believe that ‘rubbish’ Dumbledore and you told us about You-Know-Who.”

“Does that idiot have a death wish?” asked Harry in disbelief. “I always knew that he was dense... but is he that stupid?”

Hermione sighed and Ron glared at his plate. After nearly ten minutes in which they sat quietly Mrs. Weasley’s sobs finally subsided and she swished her wand, sniffing. Harry didn’t react when the food was served, he was thinking about the letter he had gotten from Voldemort.

Somehow he knew that this was a trap aimed at both sides. If he refused, Voldemort would target his friends. If he said yes, then

Voldemort would surely kill him and then target his friends. He heard the door open and close many times, but was still too engrossed in his musings to give it much notice.

"Aren't you hungry?" Harry heard the familiar voice of his godfather.

He shook his head but didn't look at Sirius. "No... not really. My appetite is ruined for today."

Sirius sighed and grabbed a small sandwich. "I'm really sorry pup... I didn't mean what I said in the library. I was being stupid and... I talked with Regulus... as I said before; I really hope you can forgive me."

Harry looked at him. "I already told you that I forgive you. Listen... I've just got so much in my head and I can understand that I'm not the friendliest of all people at the moment." He looked at his empty plate and added quietly. "Maybe you have a point. Even Ron accused me of being a Death Eater..."

"What nonsense," threw in Remus, who wasn't aware of the argument the two other Marauders had before. "He sure knows how to piss someone off."

Sirius looked at his sandwich with a guilty expression while chewing and Harry burst out laughing.

"Sorry," he said when Remus and Sirius looked at him like he was crazy. "Padfoot you just looked like you were caught with your hand in the cookie jar."

Sirius grinned slightly and ruffled his already messed up hair. "I can't help it. But I'm glad our argument hasn't changed anything."

Harry nodded and ignored Remus' questioning gaze when he looked at him. "You can tell him what I showed you before."

The werewolf nodded and Harry looked over at Hermione who was telling Ron not to eat like a pig.

"Honestly Ron!" she scoffed. "That is just disgusting! Can't you eat like a normal human being?"

Ron looked up at her with a full mouth and shrugged. "Well... 'orry tha' I'm hug'y."

Hermione wrinkled her nose and Harry grinned. "Let him be Mione. He never learns. How many times have you already reprimanded him?"

She sighed and then looked him straight in the eye. "About before... can we talk about it?"

Harry shrugged. "Sure."

She seemed to struggle with her words. "You know Harry... I really like you. I mean I really, really like you."

He raised his eyebrows but took her hand to encourage her.

"You know... I changed my perspective about you when we rescued Sirius in third year," she said quietly. "But... I didn't want to destroy our friendship because of that... I assumed that you would never like me back..."

Harry raised her hand to his lips and placed a small kiss on it. "Hermione... I already told you that I was a dense idiot back then. I don't think I even realized what I had missed until you came down the stairs at the Yule Ball. You looked so beautiful... nothing can describe what I felt at that moment."

Hermione sniffed and looked at the floor.

"Come on... look at me," said Harry softly and her head snapped up. "You are the most beautiful girl that I have ever seen in my life, you know that?"

Hermione sighed. "But I'm just a bushy haired know-it-all! I can't rival someone as good looking as Lavender or even Parvati. And I'm not nearly as pretty as Cho Chang."

Harry grabbed one of her soft curls. "I don't see anything bushy here," he smiled and held her hair up to her eyes. "And Parvati and Lavender hide themselves under tons of makeup. That's not beautiful, that's disgusting! As for Cho Chang, where did you get the idea that she is prettier than you?"

She shrugged. "You have a crush on her, don't you?"

"That was over long ago," said Harry. He was right. It had been over a year for him since he had fawned all over the Chinese girl and now he didn't even know what he had seen in her. "Have you ever looked in the mirror these last few weeks?"

Hermione blushed and then sighed. "Harry... I really like you, but... what if this doesn't work out? I don't want to lose you..."

"Do you think that this won't work?" asked Harry and wiped away some tears that threatened to fall from her eyes. "I think it will work. We just have to give it a try."

She nodded slowly and then smiled at him. "Let's give it a try."

"Well then, let's make this official," said Harry smiling as he looked her in the eye. "Hermione Jean Granger, do you want to be my girlfriend?"

Hermione nodded. "I would love to be your girlfriend Harry James Potter."

Harry beamed at her and leaned forward to give her a long and tender kiss. He heard some whistles from the twins and Sirius and some chuckles from Remus and Mr. Weasley. When they separated again he saw Ron glaring daggers at him and raised an eyebrow while Hermione leaned her head on his shoulder.

"What?"

"Have you started snogging every girl you see now or what?" he spat.

"Ron, what the hell is wrong with you today?" asked Harry as Hermione frowned angrily.

"Nothing is wrong with me... it's just... you have changed so much and now you are snogging Hermione!" he said and slammed his fist down on the table.

"Ron. Listen to me. I may have changed, but that's because I have done some growing up over time. It can't just always be the same. Times change and so do people. We can't just suddenly stop growing and behave like eleven year olds for the rest of our lives," answered Harry.

"And what is it to you that Harry and I have decided to start a relationship?" asked Hermione, giving him a pointed look.

"But...", said Ron but was interrupted.

"Oh Ronald! Grow up damn it!" huffed Hermione.

Harry chuckled because it was very rare to hear Hermione swear. He smiled when the fact that she was his girlfriend washed over him and leaned back on his chair.

Suddenly the fireplace flared and Snape appeared in the kitchen. He wrinkled his nose in distaste when he saw that they were still eating lunch and just then Harry realized that several Order members were already present.

Tonks was there, as well as the black man whose name was Kingsley Shacklebolt. The small wizard with the silk hat Sturgis Podmore, Hestia Jones, and Neville's grandmother Augusta Longbottom were also present. The only ones missing from the inner circle of the Order were Moody, McGonagall and Dumbledore.

Harry didn't bother to even try and eat something, so he gave Hermione a quick kiss on the nose - which earned him another glare from Ron - stood up and went to Professor Snape who was slightly hidden in the shadows near the door.

"What do you want Potter?" he sneered when Harry approached him.

"Sorry for disturbing you, but I have a question," answered Harry in a relaxed tone, and Snape raised an eyebrow for him to continue.

"Has Voldemort said anything about new recruits or any plans to bring someone we all know over to his side?"

Snape glared at him. "How am I supposed to know that Potter? Ask Professor Dumbledore for information. The things in the Order are secret and I don't know anything about the Dark Lord's activities."

"Cut the crap Professor," said Harry and rolled his eyes when Snape's glare intensified. "I know that you are a spy for the Order and have the Dark Mark."

Snape automatically grabbed his right arm and looked at him. "How?"

"I was with Narcissa Malfoy, remember? She told me every name of known and hidden Death Eaters."

The Potions Professor nodded slowly. "What brought on your question?"

Harry looked at him. "Can I trust you Professor? I mean really trust that you won't tell anybody? Not even Dumbledore?"

Snape seemed to consider his answer carefully, and then nodded. "Proceed."

"Follow me, Sir," said Harry and he caught Sirius' eye as he left the kitchen with Snape.

His godfather seemingly wanted to protest at first, but then nodded and went back to eating. Harry led Snape down the hallway and stopped in front of the hidden door. He ignored the Professor's gasp when he entered the hidden library and sat down on one of the chairs located near the entrance.



Snape followed him slowly and Harry looked at Regulus' ghost that was looking at him and the Potions Master oddly. "Sorry Regulus, but can we have some time to talk privately please?"

"Severus Snape...", sneered Regulus dangerously and looked at the Professor. "What are you doing here?"

"I need to sit down," said Snape and Harry might have laughed if the situation hadn't been so serious. He looked at Harry. "What is the ghost of Regulus Black doing here?"

"It's a long story, Sir. Please Regulus?"

Regulus nodded briskly and disappeared between the bookshelves. Harry looked at Snape who seemed to be deep in thought and waited for him to clear his thoughts.

"So Potter... what is this all about?" he asked. "Why do you think you can trust me?"

Harry didn't look at him. "Because Draco and Mrs. Malfoy do."

He looked up and could see that Snape's eyes had softened. "I hope they do... so? What have you done this time that you can't let Albus know?"

Harry smirked softly. "It's not always me, you know?" Snape snorted and rolled his eyes. "Okay, maybe not always, but most of the time. But we're drifting off. I got a very interesting letter today and I want to know if you had any knowledge that this would happen."

"What letter?" asked the Professor and leaned forward.

Harry quietly gave him the letter and Snape looked at him before he carefully read it. There was no visible sign on his face that he was surprised, but his skin color had gone paler. When he had finished reading, Snape looked at him and leaned back in his chair.

"I had no idea that the Dark Lord was planning this and it's... interesting I must say."

Harry raised an eyebrow questioningly. "It is, isn't it? I had hoped that you would be able to tell me if he was planning something. My options regarding this letter are rather limited as you can see. I doubt that he just needed something to kill time."

"Indeed," answered Snape. "But I still wonder why you of all people would ask me for advice. I was under the impression that you held a grudge against me Potter. Do you hope to gain something out of it?"

Harry snorted. "Please Sir, with all due respect, but you are the one who hates my guts even if I don't have a clue why."

Snape was silent and Harry folded the letter and put it back into his pocket.

"I don't want to gain anything out of it. I rather hope you can give me a hint about what to do. Draco says you are rather experienced with that."

"Does he now?" sneered Snape. "Very well then. What have you got in mind for yourself?"

Harry shrugged. "You are the spy here. I'm still trying to sort out if Voldy has finally lost it completely or if he is serious with his offer."

"What if he is serious? What would you do Potter?" Snape wanted to know.

He was silent for a moment and formulated his answer carefully. "It's... hard to tell. Both options have their pros and cons." Snape threw him a disbelieving look. "I know what you think, but take a closer look at it. If I refuse to join him he will surely target my friends and kill them if he has the chance, on the other side I wouldn't be in any more danger than I am now. If I join him... well... we would have a second spy and the chance for more information about him and his cronies. That... or he kills me on the spot."

Snape looked at him like he had grown a second head. "You would actually consider joining him? You would risk being at his mercy and

that you might get caught by the Ministry when they see the Dark Mark."

Harry shook his head. "You read the letter. I doubt that he would give me the Mark if I join him. He blabbered something about me being his equal and as his equal I wouldn't have his mark."

Snape's eyes widened. "He will mark him as his equal..." he whispered more to himself.

"What?" asked Harry and narrowed his eyes.

"Potter?" asked Snape. "Has Albus told you anything about... something the Dark Lord wishes to find?"

Harry shook his head. "You were there when I asked him. I only know that this thing Voldemort must be looking for is in the Ministry."

"So it is," said Snape and seemed to struggle with himself. "Potter... do you know why the Dark Lord came after you in the first place?"

Now Harry was at a loss. He had asked himself this question often when he had been training with Draco, Fleur and Mrs. Malfoy, but he hadn't come up with an answer. His eyes met Snape's and he knew that he knew the answer, even if he seemed to be really uncomfortable with his current position in this conversation.

"I have no clue," he said then. "But I assume that the rest of the Order knows why."

Snape nodded hesitantly. "That it does, and if I'm honest, I don't understand why Albus hasn't told you already. He told me that your Occlumency shields are unbreakable, so he doesn't need to worry about the Dark Lord gaining information through you..."

"Professor..." asked Harry quietly. "If Dumbledore doesn't want to tell me... will you?"

Snape looked him in the eyes for a long time and Harry could feel that he was testing his shields while doing so. Then he nodded and sat up straight.

"Before you were born... there was a prophecy made. I don't know the full content of this prophecy, no one except Albus does. The Dark Lord himself only knows the beginning, but only because of a foolish mistake I made."

Snape stopped, and a bad feeling started to rise in Harry's abdomen and he rested his head on his hands.

"I was there when the prophecy was made," he said and Harry's guess was confirmed. "I am sure that Narcissa told you that I really was working for the Dark Lord in the first war. I heard a part of the prophecy until I was discovered and ran. Foolish as I was, I went straight to the Dark Lord and told him what I could gather... this was what cost your parents their lives. I still regret having betrayed Lily..."

Harry's head snapped up. "My mother? So it is true then? You really were friends with her? Mrs. Malfoy didn't just tell me that to tease me?"

Snape remained silent.

Harry sighed. "What... what did you hear of this prophecy? What does Voldemort know?"

Snape took a deep breath. "It went like this: 'The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches... born as the seven month dies. Born to those who thrice defeated him. And the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal...' This is all I heard and the only part that he knows."

Harry was silent for a moment as this sunk in. "So... he believes that when I'm his equal... that he will have a better chance if I'm on his side?"

"Apparently so," answered Snape and seemed suddenly very tired. "As I said before, I don't understand why Albus hasn't told you."

Harry sighed disdainfully. "He probably believes that I'm too young and not ready. That would fit."

"So what are you going to do, if I may ask?"

"First you swear an oath that you won't tell anybody about our conversation."

Snape hesitated, then swore the oath and Harry nodded when the door opened and Sirius, followed by Remus, entered the library.

Remus' eyes were wide when he saw some of the books on the shelves and Harry grinned slightly.

"Hey kiddo," said Sirius who ignored Snape. "Moony told me about the letter."

Harry nodded. "And your opinion?"

Sirius shrugged and sat down next to him. "Both options have their pros and cons."

"Are you serious?" asked Snape. "You think so too?"

Sirius grinned and twirled his wand in his fingers. "Why Snivellus? I believe I am."

"Padfoot...", warned Remus quietly when Snape glared at him.

"So pup... what are you gonna do?" asked Sirius and looked at him. "Remus and I had a little chat about it and we both will back you up, no matter what you do."

Harry looked at each person in the room and then at Regulus who came floating through the shelves. "Well... I think I might just send a quick reply."

"So you'll do it?" asked Snape.

He nodded. "I'm curious as to what he wants me to do. And as I said... it would be very good to gather more information. No offence Professor Snape, but I don't think he tells you everything."

"None taken," answered Snape briskly. "I know that he doesn't quite trust me."

Remus chuckled. "If somebody finds out that Harry has taken matters in his own hands they are going to flip!"

Sirius looked at Snape. "So you have told him what you know?"

"I have told him the part of the prophecy if that is that what you mean Black."

"Guys?" asked Harry.

Sirius suddenly laughed. "Somehow we are a little Order in the Order at the moment when you think about it."

"Yeah...", mused Remus. "But is it wise not to tell Albus..."

Snape snorted. "He will find out soon enough."

"Guys?" asked Harry again but they ignored him.

Remus rubbed his temples. "What are we going to tell him about why we suddenly disappeared from the meeting?"

"Don't know... we had a bad sandwich?" suggested Sirius.

"GUYS!" screamed Harry who now was seriously annoyed. Remus and Sirius looked at him startled while Snape smirked slightly.

"What is it pup?" asked Sirius who rubbed his ears.

Harry looked at them. "How do you write a letter to a Dark Lord without getting killed?"

I hope you liked the chapter!

Press the little button there and give me a Review!!!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 8

"Snuffles!" called a young man with blond hair and hazelnut-brown eyes grinning over his shoulder. "Damn... you are slow today!"

A huge black dog that was running behind the teen gave an offended bark but quickened his pace a little bit.

They were running at top speed through a crowded airport and the teen seemed to be looking for something. He ran straight to the exit and jumped over a trolley that was in his way. The dog barked again and the teen abruptly changed his direction and held the door of a bathroom open for him.

When he had made sure that nobody was in there, he nodded at the dog. The dog then changed shape and a black-haired man appeared sitting on the floor and holding his sides.

"Why do we have to travel by muggle means again Harry?" asked Sirius Black who had trouble controlling his breathing.

Harry who was in disguise rolled his eyes. "Because your apparition license has long been blocked and the floo in France Manor broke down because there is no longer a fireplace, thanks to Lucius."

"Portkey?" wheezed Sirius hopefully, but Harry shook his head.

"You have worked in the Ministry as an Auror for Merlin's sake! You of all people should know how a portkey works when there are Anti-Portkey and Anti-Apparition wards!"

"Right..." said Sirius and shuddered. "But you could have asked for the nearest location for us to land! But nooo... you had to go by that plane thingy!"

Harry grinned. "Well... I always wanted to fly."

"That's what brooms are for! Gulping gargoyles! I tell you, you'll never get me to set foot on one of those things ever again!" raged Sirius.



"Yeah, yeah. Calm down Padfoot," said Harry and Sirius stood up and flicked his wand.

His silky black hair changed to blond just like Harry's and his eyes also took on the color of hazelnuts. With another flick of his wand his hair shortened and he grinned at him.

"Satisfied?" he asked.

Harry looked at him and nodded and made his way to the door. "You'll do. Come on! Draco is going to skin us alive if we don't turn up in the next ten seconds."

Sirius sighed and followed his godson out of the bathroom.

Harry exited the airport and looked around the busy street. He couldn't see any sign of the familiar platinum blond Slytherin and jumped when somebody tapped him on the arm. His wand was ready in his pocket and his fingers twitched. He heard an amused chuckle and slowly turned around.

Harry found himself face to face with a small boy that couldn't be older than ten years. The boy wore expensive clothes and had mousy brown hair and dark grey eyes. Behind him stood a plump woman with short curly hair. Harry just raised his eyebrows and still held his wand ready.

"Constant Vigilance!" chirped the boy and Harry's eyes widened before he broke out into a fit of laughter.

Sirius looked at Harry oddly and then down at the small boy before a grin formed on his face.

He leaned down and ruffled the boy's neatly combed hair. "My... aren't you a cute little fellow?" he said with a mischievous smile.

The boy smacked his hand away. "Stop that you mangy mutt!"

Sirius chuckled and looked at the woman who was fidgeting slightly and looking nervous. "I must say Cissy; you really have a polite little brat there. It's good to see you."

The woman snorted amused and nodded, smiling. "It's good to see you too Lord Black. I'm honored that you gave my son and I another chance."

Harry, who had slowly regained his composure, broke out into laughter again when he saw Sirius' face changing from baffled to disgusted. Harry then looked at the small boy.

"I must say Draco... this image fits you perfectly," he said between gasps.

"Harry...", said the boy in a growl as he glared up at him.

"Very scary...", chuckled Harry, amused, and the small boy rolled his eyes.

"Well then...", said the woman nervously. "The car is parked not far from here. We should be going..."

"Lead the way!" nodded Sirius and ruffled the small boy's hair one last time.

The boy just sighed and they followed the woman to a simple, but still extravagant, car that was parked just one block away from the airport.

Sirius and the disguised Narcissa took the front seats with the latter one in the driver's seat and Harry and the small brown-haired Draco in the back.

"The ride will only take twenty minutes," mumbled Draco as he leaned back in his seat. "Hopefully the Polyjuice Potion won't wear off until then... this is so damn complicated!"

"Why did you let your father blow up the fireplace then?" asked Harry smiling.

"Shut it Potter!" answered Draco, annoyed.

Harry quirked an eyebrow. "Oh? Back to Potter now, are we Malfoy? And I thought we were friends..." he sniffed dramatically.

Draco stayed silent and the rest of the drive was uneventful. Twenty minutes later they arrived in front of a large manor and past the front gate that closed automatically.

When they left the car, Draco and Narcissa changed back to their normal appearances and fought with their clothes. Narcissa nearly vanished into her now oversized clothes and Draco just looked ridiculous in his small clothing. He took out his wand and changed them into something more fitted before he threw Harry, who was laughing again, a mild glare.

"I'm impressed," said Sirius when he stepped out of the car. "I hadn't thought that you were able to drive a muggle car Cissy."

She shrugged. "You learn things like that in our circumstances."

Narcissa then enveloped Harry in a tight hug that he gladly responded to and smiled up at him because he was slightly taller than she was.

"Then come on inside," said Draco. "Father surely won't be here now. He had some trouble with the Dark Nutter."

Harry chuckled, and they followed the two Malfoys inside the manor. Narcissa led them into a comfortable living room and Harry's eyes caught sight of the destroyed fireplace. Sirius whistled when he saw it.

"He did a good job..." he said casually and flopped down on the sofa. "Why did he do it anyway?"

Narcissa conjured four cups of hot tea and sighed. "He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named wants Draco to be marked before the next term at Hogwarts starts. Until now I could convince Lucius that Draco wasn't ready to join him, and well... he was tortured by the Dark Lord and let his anger out on us... and the fireplace."

Harry looked sharply at her. "Are you hurt Mrs. Malfoy?"

She shook her head and sipped her tea. "Just a small bruise on my right shoulder where he grabbed me." A slight smile played around her lips when she looked at him. "How often have I told you to call me Narcissa?"

Harry shrugged. "I think nearly every day that I was here. I just always forget it."

Sirius cautiously sniffed his tea and took a small sip. "Then maybe you have to change that soon, because she may not be a Malfoy much longer."

Narcissa's eyes snapped to her cousin and she stared at him. "So you... believe me?"

Sirius was silent for a long moment and he looked at Harry before he spoke again. "If Harry believes you, then I don't see why I shouldn't. However..." He leaned forward and looked her straight in the eye. "I want to know what caused the change of heart."

Draco stiffened and Harry lowered his gaze when Narcissa began to tear up. Sirius looked at them all and waited patiently.

"Mother was tortured and..." whispered Draco as he patted his mother's back. "... and sometimes put under the Imperius-Curse..."

"WHAT!" screamed Sirius and dropped his teacup. "Was it...?"

Narcissa nodded. "It was Lucius... you know that I was forced to marry him after my sister Andromeda married that muggle Ted Tonks, don't you?"

"Yeah..." said Sirius. "Even if I wasn't there myself when it happened. Andy told me about it. But she said you didn't fight it when they told you."

"How could I?" cried Narcissa and lowered her head. "They would have killed me. You know our family! How they were and... how some of them still are..."

"Bellatrix," said Sirius quietly. "Yeah... I know how they were and that my dear cousin Bella followed the tradition."

"She may have been and still is my older sister," whispered Narcissa, "But she would have been the first one to kill me if I fought against the marriage to such a rich and pure-blooded wizard. And she will... when she gets out of Azkaban and discovers that I'm not on her side."

"What did Lucius do to you Cissy?" asked Sirius skeptically. "You could have gotten out of the marriage in the beginning when you told the Ministry what he did. It's a common agreement in every marriage."

Narcissa shook her head sadly. "That is only the case when you haven't got an heir. Before Draco was born... he treated me friendly and respectful, he ensured that I would feel comfortable around him but... after Draco was born he showed his true face." She sighed.

"When I gave him an heir I sealed the marriage and wasn't able to get out until our son came of age. I knew that of course... but I had hoped that he was really the man he pretended to be. I was wrong. Terribly wrong... he left me alone until Draco was a year old and didn't need so much of my caring. That was also the time when He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named was defeated by Harry."

"Lucius was furious! All day he was at the ministry bribing important people to testify that he had been cursed to serve him. After he was cleared of all charges, he vented all his anger out on me. Not as much when Draco was near... but regularly when Draco left for Hogwarts. I remember that there were times when I couldn't remember what I had done for nearly a week..."

She fell silent and Draco rubbed his eyes while Harry and Sirius were looking silently at the table, the tea long forgotten.

Draco decided to say something. "I found out about all this two years ago. One year for you. After my third year at Hogwarts I caught him as he cast the Imperius-Curse on mother before we went to the Quidditch World-Cup. I always knew that my father wasn't the friendliest of people, but just then I saw what kind of person he really was. I admit that there was a time when I respected him; even looked up to him and wanted to be just like him. After the World-Cup... when he was out there with the other Death Eaters tormenting that muggle family, it became so real... all the stories he told me about the glorious reign of the Dark Lord and his beliefs in the purity of blood... when he told me that he wanted me to join You-Know-Who and follow his legacy I was overjoyed. But I saw at the World-Cup how they tortured a little muggleborn witch before they had fun with this family."

"That was when I lost respect for him and his beliefs. I was disgusted and I can tell you... nothing is more important to me than my mother. I thought a lot about it in my fourth year and after the third task of the Triwizard Tournament I finally decided that I had to do something. I approached Harry, we used the Time Turner, I became of age... and mother could finally be free from her miserable life with my father."

Sirius frowned. "But why is Lucius able to gain access to this manor then?"

"This manor has been the property of the Malfoy family for over two hundred years now. We had nowhere else to go, but anything was better than seeing him every day," answered Narcissa sniffing.

"I... understand," said Sirius and Harry thought that he had never seen his godfather this serious before, except when he had talked to him for the first time in third year. "I believe you and I think it's time that you should be free from that bastard."

Narcissa looked at him with wide eyes. "Really? You... you mean it?"

He nodded and she threw herself on the floor in front of him whispering her thanks and sobbing.

"For Merlin's sake Cissy! Stop that!" commanded Sirius slightly angrily. "I'm not one of those idiots that think you have to kiss the floor in front of them!"

Narcissa stood up and looked ashamed. "Forgive me."

Sirius looked sharply at her and sighed. "Sure. So we just have one matter to take care of. But you must be one hundred and fifty percent sure that you really want this."

"Of course. I've waited for this moment for so long."

Harry looked at Draco who was hastily wiping a tear away from his eyes and smiled softly. He seemed to be just as happy as his mother. But Harry knew that he would never really show his relief. He was much too proud to show it.

"Well then," said Sirius and stood up before he took his wand out and nodded to Narcissa who mirrored his action.

Sirius straightened his shoulders and coughed before he touched Narcissa's wand with his own. "I, Sirius Orion Black, Head of the most Noble and Ancient House of Black, hereby declare the marriage between Lucius Abraxas Malfoy, Head of the House of Malfoy, and Narcissa Dorea Malfoy nee Black, the daughter of the House of Black, officially dissolved. May you once again carry the name of your ancestors with pride."

Harry grinned when he saw that Sirius looked extremely disgusted by talking stuffy like that and then a bright flash lit the entire room and Narcissa sniffled.

"I, Narcissa Dorea Malfoy, Daughter of the House of Black, hereby agree with all my heart, soul and magic to dissolve the marriage and wear the name of Black with pride once again. So mote it be. "

Draco too raised his wand and added it to the other two. Sirius and Narcissa looked at him startled, while Harry smirked when he began to talk. "I, Draco Lucius Malfoy, with all my heart, soul and magic will

follow my mother's lead and abandon the name of Malfoy for the name of the most Noble and Ancient House of Black. So mote it be."

The flash brightened and then disappeared with a slight ringing noise.

Sirius put his wand away. "Well... welcome back into the family Cissy and welcome Draco. From now on you shall be known as Narcissa Black and Draco Black."

Narcissa beamed and threw her arms around him while Harry patted Draco, who had a pleased smile on his face, on the back.

"I'm happy for you," he said softly and Draco nodded. "I had no idea that you wanted to change your name too."

Draco looked at him seriously. "I want to cut all ties with my father. He is nothing more to me now than another Death Eater."

Harry's godfather sat down again and they enjoyed the tea silently. Narcissa was still smiling from ear to ear and even Draco couldn't seem to get the smile off his face.

Sirius and Harry looked at each other. Both felt happy for them and didn't want to disturb the moment for them with Order business.

After a while Narcissa looked at Sirius. "So... what else did you come for?"

Sirius grinned. "As sharp as always Cissy. You are right of course; we came for another purpose too."

"And what may that be?" she asked and vanished the empty cups with a flick of her wand.

"I want to give you the opportunity to live at Grimmauld Place. There you will be safe and Lucius won't be able to get you when he sees that the marriage not only is dissolved in the Ministry records but also magically. And I want to ask you... if you will join the Order of the Phoenix."



Narcissa stared at him. "Join the Order? They... they will actually let me?"

Sirius nodded. "Dumbledore himself suggested I ask you. And in my opinion it would be wise, because this will give you and your son more protection."

"I... yes. Yes I want to join the Order," answered Narcissa determinedly.

Suddenly the door opened and Fleur Delacour entered. Narcissa greeted her warmly while Sirius grinned mischievously when she bent down to them and kissed Harry and Draco on the cheeks.

"Not a word," warned Harry to his godfather.

He mock pouted. "Who do you think I am? I just wonder what Hermione would say about you kissing other girls..."

Draco looked at him astonished. "You and Granger? You are together now?"

He just nodded and Fleur beamed at him.

Harry stood up. "Excuse me, but I have to talk to Draco and Fleur privately before we head back to London."

They nodded and the three left the living room and went into the library.

"Waat eez it?" asked Fleur when she saw his serious expression.

"I got a letter," said Harry and Draco rolled his eyes.

"Damn Harry! That's a new one," he said sarcastically and snickered quietly with Fleur.

He rolled his eyes. "It was from Voldemort."

They abruptly stopped joking and looked at him wide-eyed. Both had their mouths slightly open and didn't seem to be able to form a sentence.

"He wanted me to join him... not as a Death Eater, but as his equal," Harry continued. "I sent my reply two days ago."

Draco snapped his mouth shut with an audible 'click' and Fleur asked immediately. "And waat did 'ou answer 'im? 'Ou did not agree, did 'ou?"

Harry shrugged. "You will see, I guess. I don't think it will take him long to respond to my answer. I'm just curious as to what it will be."

"Your curiosity can be solved," said a cold, silky voice behind them.

They whirled around with their wands drawn and stared dumbfounded at Lucius Malfoy who stood in the doorway. He was exactly as Harry remembered him. He had pale blond hair, cold grey eyes, had a pointed face, and wore a Death Eater robe. Harry's eyes went to the small, chubby person with watery eyes, rat-like face and pasty skin next to him and he felt anger rise inside him like poison.

"Wormtail!" he spat and the rat looked at him slightly scared. "What do you want?!"

"Now, now Potter," said Lucius with a sneer. "This is my house and I'm surprised to see you here... together with my son and heir."

"I'm no longer your heir father!" spat Draco and clutched his wand tightly. "I'm not related to anyone by the name of Malfoy. My name is Draco Black!"

"How dare you?" hissed Lucius and took the wand out of his long cane. "Who do you think you are to talk to me like that?"

Harry growled, still looking at Wormtail. "What do you WANT?!"

Wormtail trembled slightly and gave a letter to Lucius. "T-this i-is our L-lords answer to y-your l-le-letter.", he stuttered and cowered behind the other Death Eater.

Lucius held the letter out to him. "Just read it Potter. I'm sure you want to know what our Lord has to say."

Harry took the letter, unfolded it slowly, and began to read:

Harry Potter,

You ensured your own death with this... you have decided not to join me and have insulted me with your reply as well. I offered you revenge for that old lemon-drop-sucking fool, but you refused... a foolish Gryffindor trait you got from your foolish parents. They paid for it and now it's your turn!

I will hunt you down, your friends and everything you hold dear!

You will die, but I will make sure that you beg for me to kill you before I grant you my mercy!

Tom Marvolo Riddle

Lord Voldemort

Harry stared at the letter and scoffed. That had been clear from the beginning. He looked at the questioning faces of his friends and the smug smile on Lucius' face.

"Well, I didn't expect anything else after telling him that he is a crazy, snake-faced, old pedophile with no sense of reality when I replied to his offer...", shrugged Harry and set the letter on fire.

"Crucio!" roared Lucius and the curse brushed Harry's shoulder as he ducked out of the way. "HOW DARE YOU!"

Harry raised a shield with his wand and nodded to Draco and Fleur who ran past him out of the library.

“Crucio! Stupefy! CRUCIO!” screamed Lucius, and Harry dropped to the floor and rolled to the side when one of the curses hit a bookshelf that crashed to the floor.

“Man... a big variety of curses you have,” mocked Harry and fixed his eyes on Wormtail who was holding a wand in his silvery hand.

“Sectumsemptra!” the rat cried.

“Protego horribilis!” countered Harry and the curse was thrown back with a bright flash of light. “Reducto!”

Wormtail was thrown back by the curse and the reflected spell hit him on the shoulder where a bloody slash appeared. Harry held his shield up and ran past Lucius who was firing curses everywhere now.

When he was in the corridor, Sirius and Narcissa came running out of the living room, followed by Fleur and Draco. Harry shook his head and they skidded to a halt and turned around to follow him back into the living room.

“Shut the door!” he called and positioned himself in front of the totally destroyed fireplace. He cast a Reparo, but it wasn’t of much use. Only one stone was repaired. “Help me here!”

Narcissa and Sirius where casting every locking charm, curse and jinx they knew at the door and Harry heard the faint yell of a Blasting-Curse from Wormtail.

He looked shortly to Sirius who was shaking with rage when he heard the traitor’s voice and then looked at his two friends.

“Ready?” he asked and they nodded. “On three. One... two... REPARO!”

The destroyed fireplace slowly repaired itself as they forced their power into the spell. After a long and straining minute the fireplace was intact again.

“Waat ze ‘ell did ‘e do to make it so difficult?” asked Fleur who made a roaring fire appear.

“HARRY! Are you done yet?” screamed Narcissa when a hard blast hit the door.

“Yes, come on!” he called back, and Narcissa stormed over to him.

Draco grabbed her and Harry shoved a piece of parchment with the address into their hands. Draco quickly read it and took a bag of floo powder out of his robes and gave it to Harry. He threw some of it into the fire and vanished a second later.

“SIRIUS! COME ON!” screamed Harry when Fleur also vanished.

“But Wormtail is out there!” he spat and Harry saw that he was still shaking with rage.

“Doesn’t matter!” he said and ran over to him just as the door was blasted open. “We have to go. NOW!”

“But-”

“Sectumsemptra!” screamed Lucius and the curse hit Harry on the chest while he shoved his godfather into the fireplace, but it wasn’t as effective due to his still slightly upheld shield.

He whirled around and glared at the two Death Eaters after Sirius vanished. His eyes fixed on Wormtail.

“One day...,” he whispered dangerously. “I will get you! Expelliarmus!”

He caught the two wands that were flying at him and threw them into the fire where they burned with a very nasty noise.

“What now?” he mocked with a smirk.

Lucius also smirked and Harry narrowed his eyes at him. What was he up to?

Suddenly ten other Death Eaters stormed into the room and Harry sighed before he threw some floo powder into the fire. The curses were now flying wildly and he turned around one last time to look at Wormtail and raised his wand.

"Fyre..." he whispered with a cold smirk, and the whole room burst into flames that took the shapes of numerous magical beasts as the Death Eaters watched in horror.

"RETREAT!" screamed Lucius madly when the Anti-Apparition and Anti-Portkey wards fell down.

Harry said nothing and stepped into the fire. He heard some screams before he closed his eyes and whispered his destination.

He whirled around and was thrown out of the fireplace at Grimmauld Place after a short time.

"Harry!" said Sirius and helped him to his feet. "Are you all right?!"

"Yeah..." said Harry and cracked his neck before he looked at the new Blacks. "I'm sorry."

Narcissa blinked. "For what?" she asked perplexed.

"For burning the manor down with Fiendfyre and missing the Death Eaters," he smirked.

"YOU DID WHAT?!" screamed Draco and fell down on a chair. "You... used Fiendfyre? You must have hit your head! That could have gone terribly wrong!"

Sirius looked at him when the kitchen door burst open and all the Weasleys, Tonks and Hermione entered. They stopped in their tracks when they saw Harry's bloody clothes and the small cut on Sirius' face that even Harry hadn't seen before.

At last their eyes travelled to Narcissa and Draco. They looked at them and were totally silent.

After two minutes Ron opened his mouth...

“What... are they doing here?” he voiced everyone’s thoughts.

So that was the eighth chapter!

I hope you liked it!

Don’t forget to review and vote in the Poll!!!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 9

Harry, Sirius, Narcissa, Fleur and Draco stood there looking at the newcomers. The only people who seemed to know what was going on were Remus, who had just come into the kitchen, and Tonks. Both were slightly smiling.

Harry rubbed his head sheepishly. "Well... you see..."

Suddenly Hermione rushed over to him and tackled him in a hug. He gasped at the force of her embrace and she carefully examined his bloody shirt.

"What happened?" she asked in concern as she traced the cut softly with her finger while looking at him expectantly. "And what are those two doing here?"

"I think I might be able to explain that." said Dumbledore who entered the kitchen exactly at that moment.

Harry sighed in relief and so did Sirius. There sure were times when Dumbledore did something brilliant. Being at the right place at the right time was one of them.

"I'm waiting." said Ron through gritted teeth as he glared at Draco. "I sure want to know what that git is doing here!"

"Ronald!" scolded Mrs. Weasley. "Show a little more respect!"

"Honestly," huffed Hermione and threw a quick glance at the new Blacks. "I'm sure there is a very good reason that they are here."

Harry smiled at his girlfriend and gave her a quick kiss on the lips when she sat down at the table. Draco smirked at him and he rolled his eyes.

"But he is a Malfoy!" snapped Ron exasperated. "And a lousy junior Death Eater just like his idiot of a father!"



Draco had his wand out in the blink of an eye and pointed it directly at Ron's head. "Shut up Weasley! Don't you dare to compare me to that man! Don't you dare! I'm nothing like my father. I would rather die... and if I were... I would have killed you years ago!"

"Professor, I'm going to change my clothes while you tell them. I think..." Harry hesitated and sighed with a look at Ron and Hermione. "...the spell is lifted. You may tell them everything and what my part in this is. They are all in danger now."

Dumbledore looked at him and nodded slowly. "Very well."

Harry wanted to leave the kitchen when Snape stepped out of the fireplace. He nodded to Draco and Narcissa with a small smile on his face and then looked at him.

"Potter," he nodded and Harry lifted his eyebrows. "We have to talk. Alone."

"Yes, Sir." he answered and led him out of the kitchen. "Is my room okay?"

"It will do," retorted Snape grumpily as they climbed the stairs.

When they reached the door to Harry's room the Potions Master raised his eyebrows when Harry countered several wards, curses and jinxes that were in place.

He smiled slightly and answered the Professor's unasked question when he opened the door: "For safety. I don't want anyone to look through my stuff... it could be quite confusing for them... and some trouble for me. Please enter."

Snape entered the room, and Harry saw with a slight smirk that his eyes widened when he saw all the books about dark magic that were neatly put on the shelf and laying on his bed.

"This is... an interesting set of books you have here." he commented obviously impressed.

"Thank you, Sir." said Harry and went to get a fresh shirt out of his wardrobe. "So... what is it that you want to talk about?"

Snape was silent for a moment while looking at some of the very rare potion books. "You see Potter... I'm curious about your reply to the Dark Lord regarding his offer. He was... furious to say it mildly."

Harry chuckled and vanished his bloody shirt with a flick of his wand. "I can imagine."

"Why was that the case?" asked Snape after Harry had thrown the new black shirt over his head and grinned happily. "He tortured several Death Eaters and even killed two low ranking idiots."

"You see... I didn't answer him in the way he expected me to. I told him off quite nastily." replied Harry casually and flopped down on his bed. "Need I say more?"

Snape frowned. "I don't like to say it, but I'm impressed. You have changed a lot it seems Mr. Potter."

"Is this a compliment... or a very well hidden insult on your part Professor?", Harry wanted to know after Snape rolled his eyes and sat down on the chair in front of the small desk next to the wardrobe.

"Take it as you want." shrugged Snape smirking and Harry felt more and more comfortable around the Potions Master. "As you told me in Diagon Alley, times change and so do people. I believe... that that should be the case now."

Harry looked at him mildly surprised. "You are offering me a truce? After all these years... just like that? Just because I changed a bit in your opinion?"

Snape shook his head. "Yes... and no. Draco is my godson as you very well know. I've always cared for him and I'm thankful for what you did for him. You saved him from the life he would have led if he had to join the Dark Lord. And... you must have something good hidden under your arrogance for Draco to see you as his friend."

“Gee thanks, I guess.” replied Harry in a sarcastic tone and threw him a mild glare. “Does this mean you will stop tormenting me in your classes, Sir?”

Snape gave him a withering look. “In your dreams maybe. I don’t play favourites.”

Harry snorted and flicked his wand to get the books on his bed to fly to the shelf. “I’ve noticed that. No offence Professor, but you treat the lions and badgers like they are dirt under your shoes and nearly ignore the ravens. And you favour your snakes quite too much, Sir.”

“Is that so Mr. Potter?” asked Snape smirking.

“Yeah...” replied Harry and scratched his head. “But let me guess; it is to keep up appearances?”

“Not only that.” answered Snape and gave him a long look. “You may find it surprising, but it’s not possible to have a civilized conversation with some of them. My snakes are the total opposite of the other houses. They are – like the sorting hat says – cunning, smart and have ambitions.”

“So the lions, ravens and badgers are dumb? Is it that what you are trying to tell me here?” Harry wanted to know and looked like he was mortally offended.

“No...” said Snape slowly and really seemed to think about it. “They are... different. The Slytherins’ also have their flaws. The Gryffindors’ are reckless but they favour bravery, the Hufflepuffs’ are loyal and true friends and the Ravenclaws’ are smart and level-headed. Having said that, most of the cauldrons are blown up by Hufflepuffs’ and Gryffindors’ though. I’m scared out of my wits already when I think about this year’s OWL classes.”

Harry laughed out loud at that and looked at his potions Professor. “I think... you might have a point there, Sir. I just hope you spare me and don’t partner me up with Neville. He is a good guy but horrible with potions.”

Snape looked at him in disbelief. "Horrible? He's worst then... ah... whatever."

They sat in silence and Snape once again looked at the books on the shelf. Harry bit his lip feeling slightly uncomfortable. Should he ask the Professor what was on his mind? Snape let his eyes drift through the room and met Harry's, and as always, raised an eyebrow.

"You seem to have a question Mr. Potter," he stated.

"Indeed," whispered Harry lost in his thoughts. "Professor... this may not be something I should ask but... why do you hate my father? I noticed that every time someone speaks of him you are... well..."

Snape sighed and stood up. "I think this really is something I won't answer. Maybe one day... but not now."

Harry was disappointed but nodded and stood up as well. "I understand, Sir. Should we go back to the kitchen?"

"Yes," was Snape's short reply and he straightened his robes and plastered on his usual sneer.

Harry chuckled and they went down again. Really... sometimes Snape could even be nice if he wanted to, he mused.

When they entered the kitchen he was a little surprised to see that no one had blown something up and were still sitting at the tables. But he could see the confused and disbelieving faces of Hermione, Ron, Ginny and the twins. When they realized that he and the Professor had entered, the teens all whirled around.

"Is it true?" asked Hermione immediately when he slowly took his seat between her and his godfather.

Harry looked at Dumbledore and nodded. "Yes... it's true. I assume he told you everything?"

"He told us that-"

“-you spent a lot of time-

“-with Malfoy, no, Black and-

“-Fleur and used a time turner to-

“-train and visit our-

“-oldest brothers in Egypt and-

“-Romania!” said the Fred and George with their usual confusing ‘Twin-Speech’.

“That sums it up quite nicely.” nodded Harry and looked at Draco to see if something else had been said.

He shook his head and smirked slightly at him while looking at Ron for a brief second.

Harry’s heart sunk and he slowly turned to the redhead who had a frown on his face and seemed to be thinking hard.

“Harry?” asked Hermione quietly. “Do you... do you trust him? Do you trust... Draco?”

Draco’s eyes snapped to the brown-haired witch and Harry smiled softly. “I do. As much as I trust everyone else who is in this room here.”

Hermione hesitated and looked over to Draco who sat on the other side of the table next to his mother and Fleur. “Then... then I will trust him too. Because... I trust you.”

“Thank you.” said Draco quietly and gave her a grateful look.

Hermione smiled slightly and intertwined her fingers with Harry’s. He gave a sigh of relief. Now he just had to wait for Ron’s reaction and he wasn’t quite sure if he would like it. He narrowed his eyes when he thought about the letter he got from Voldemort and brushed a hand through his hair.

"Harry. What are you thinking about?" asked Dumbledore and everyone once again looked at him.

"You know....," said Harry. "I didn't tell you, but Voldemort send me a letter with an offer to join him and....," he looked the Headmaster straight in the eye, "... be his equal. The equal that he marked me to be. I refused, but still... it made me curious."

Hermione gasped and he saw that Ron had gone pale. Harry assumed that he had made the connection between the letter he had read when they had their argument.

Dumbledore stared at him and sighed. "So... you know?"

Harry nodded and briefly looked at the Potions Master. "He told me in his letter. But I had the impression that it wasn't the whole prophecy. Am I right?"

"Yes my boy... he doesn't know the whole prophecy." said Dumbledore and put his fingers together.

"Why didn't you tell me?" he wanted to know.

"I thought you weren't ready to know about it," he answered. "You may be of age, but sixteen is still very young. Too young to wear such a burden."

"Are you telling me the whole truth now?"

Dumbledore was silent for a moment and looked at him with a slightly sad gaze. "The new term starts in two weeks. Is it okay to wait until then? I... I promise you now that I will tell you everything you want to know."

Harry considered it for a moment and then nodded. "Alright. But no more lies and half-truths. Agreed?"

Dumbledore nodded and Harry gave him a slight smile that seemed to ease some of the Headmaster's bad feelings.

"Well then...", said Snape. "I will be on my way now. I just wanted to have a quick chat with Mr. Potter."

"When something happens you inform us immediatly, okay?", asked Dumbledore and Snape just nodded before he vanished with floo powder.

They all were silent for a moment while Harry looked at Dumbledore again. He could see that the old wizard didn't mean anything bad by not telling him, but still. It made him slightly angry.

"Porfessor?", he asked and startled everyone out of their wits. "Is it possible... to meet Fawkes in the near future?"

Dumbledore looked at him and the twinkle was back in his eyes. "Of course it is. Is it okay for you to meet him on the first day of term? I'm afraid that even he is quite busy at the moment."

"That's okay," shrugged Harry and fell silent again.

"T-this l-letter..." stuttered Ron suddenly, white as a sheet. "I-it was from... You-Know-Who?"

"Is it okay if we leave the kitchen now?" asked Hermione hesitantly. "I think we have much to talk about elsewhere."

It was Mr. Weasley who answered. "That seems to be a good idea."

Harry threw him and his girlfriend a grateful look and nodded to Dumbledore before he stood up. He gave Draco a look that clearly said that he should come too and Hermione grabbed Ron on the arm and they left the kitchen.

Halfway up the stairs the twins passed them and gave a wink to Harry that just had to mean trouble for someone. He chuckled quietly and stopped in front of his room before he turned around to look at his friends.

"Ron?" he asked.

"The letter... it was from You-Know-Who and I threw it right into your face... I... I accused you of joining the one that killed your parents... I'm so stupid..."

"Did you have a talk with Hermione to realize that? Or did you come to this conclusion yourself?" Harry wanted to know.

"I thought about it."

"Wow..." sneered Draco. "Weasley can think."

"Draco!" scolded Harry while Ron glared at the blond. "Stop that."

He sighed and Harry embraced Hermione from behind and leaned his head on her shoulder. She sighed quite happily and leaned back a little bit. Ron looked at them and bit his lip.

"You know that we have to change how we treat each other now, don't you?" asked Draco and seemed to be quite miffed.

"What should we do?!" Ron wanted to know.

"I'm ready to make a truce with you Weasley, if you are." replied Draco.

"See?" said Harry. "He is ready to leave the difficulties we had behind and start anew."

"But I don't like him!" protested the redhead.

"Then at least try to act civil towards him. We are allies now and don't need to fight against each other." said Hermione seriously.

"Anything against that?" added Harry casually as he looked at Ron.

"No mate...", said Ron sighing while looking at Draco's outstretched hand and took it very slowly.



“Then... let’s try it,” said Draco who seemed just as uncomfortable as Ron.

“Finally those two see the light.” chuckled Hermione and Harry snorted in amusement.

Ron and Draco looked at each other for a while longer and then at Harry. Draco smiled but Ron, on the other hand, lowered his gaze to the floor.

“Harry... I’m sorry that I blew up on you like that and treated you like shit... I was... I just was jealous about everything I guess. I was afraid that you would just forget about me and just hang around with him. I guess I’m not that much of a friend... but I’m okay with him being here if you deem him trustworthy.”

Harry smiled and draped an arm over his shoulder. “Thanks Ron. You know... I wouldn’t be what I am without you. You have been my best friend since first year. I consider you to be my brother and I would hate to cut ties with you because of something like that. But...” Ron looked at him gulping. “Don’t do something stupid like that ever again!”

He mock saluted and grinned in relief. “Got it Captain!”

Harry smiled mischievously and Ron took a step back.

“I know that look...,” he said and started to turn around. “The twins always have it when... oh shit! NO, Harry, no, you don’t!”

Harry took a step forwards and Ron tripped over a small, nearly invisible string that was attached behind him on the floor.

“Activate!” he said grinning and suddenly Ron’s clothes changed into a pink tutu and he started to jump around in the hallway.

They all burst out laughing and Fred and George who had heard their brother’s yell looked out of their room and gave each other a high-five.

“MAKE IT STOP!” screamed Ron but laughed himself.

Harry smiled and kissed Hermione's cheek. It seemed that everything wouldn't be as bad as he thought it would be.

That was the ninth chapter. I hope you liked it.

Review please!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 10

Harry was lying on his bed at Grimmauld Place attempting to read a book about blood-magic and rituals. But it wasn't really working. For nearly fifteen minutes he had just stared at the words, lost in his own thoughts.

Tomorrow his fifth year at Hogwarts would start and he had a very bad feeling...

Something just wasn't right. He hadn't heard anything about Voldemort and his Death Eaters since they had visited Narcissa and Draco in the now burned down France Manor. That alone made him suspicious.

But there was something good too. Ron and Draco seemed to be getting along just fine now, even if they did nag each other most of the time. It had gotten on him and Hermione's nerves the first few days, but now they could be left alone without being afraid to find the room they were in crumbled to dust.

He sighed and adjusted his pillow when he thought back to last week when they had started training again. This time however there were four people. Hermione and Ron were using the Time Turner regularly while Harry and Draco were setting up schedules for them.

They had decided that they would just use Narcissa's Time Turner to tell them what to do and then leave them alone until the evening. The options of using the time turner in this house were rather limited, because they had to be careful that they didn't run into themselves; they just made two days out of one, instead of to going to the extreme that Harry and Draco had.

Fleur didn't train with them now because she had too much to do at Gringotts and Harry noticed that she seemed to have taken a liking to the oldest of the Weasley brothers. Draco, of course, teased her mercilessly whenever she was around.

Suddenly there was a knock on the door and Harry looked down at himself. He was wearing a pair of black jeans and no shirt. He shrugged and opened the door with a flick of his wand.

Just as he had guessed Hermione, Ron and Draco entered the room. Hermione stopped in her tracks and blushed bright red when she saw his state of undress and both Ron and Draco snickered quietly.

Harry grinned and stood up. He bowed formally to his girlfriend. "Sorry for my appearance young lady. I didn't think I would have visitors today."

She giggled, something she did more often these days, and gave him a peck on the nose. "It's quite alright young Sir. I... like your appearance just as it is."

Harry raised his eyebrows when she looked at his chest and she nodded, still blushing slightly.

"Well then..." said Harry and leaned forward to give her a real kiss. "I think I should do this more often."

"Are you finished now?" asked Ron who rolled his eyes. "We didn't come here to watch you snog Hermione."

Hermione sighed and glared mildly at him. "You sure know how to kill the mood Ronald."

Ron grinned and dodged a book Harry had thrown at him. "Somebody has to do it."

"Yeah... and why not just the weasel?" asked Draco.

"Do you want to bounce again ferret?"

Draco paled slightly. "No... once was enough."

Harry burst out laughing at the smug look on Ron's face and thought back to when the fake Moody had transformed Draco into a ferret. He clearly remembered Ron's look of pure bliss at that moment.

"So what is it?" asked Harry and sat down on the bed again with Hermione on his lap.

"We just wanted to know where you were," answered Draco. "It's nearly five o'clock and we haven't seen you since breakfast. Oh, and Mrs. Weasley is going barmy in the kitchen because the Hogwarts letters have arrived."

Harry looked at him. "You hang around Ron too much. You're starting to sound just like him."

Draco choked and Ron glared at him. He just shrugged and looked at Hermione who had made herself comfortable on his lap.

"They are a little bit late, aren't they?"

Hermione frowned. "You're right. Draco had gotten his letter weeks ago."

"What have you been doing anyway?" asked Ron now.

Harry looked at the books scattered on the floor around his bed. "As you can see I have done a little research. Sirius allowed me to take some books from the hidden Black library. They are actually quite interesting... if not a little bit disturbing."

Hermione bent down and looked at a potions book. A grin made its way to her face. "What have you got here?'Most Potente Potions' I sure know that book."

"How come?" asked Draco and raised his eyebrow. "This is a very advanced potions book. And it's restricted by the Ministry."

Harry, Ron and Hermione looked at each other.

"You see Draco....," said Harry and chuckled slightly. "Hermione here brewed Polyjuice potion in our second year. You have three guesses as to which book she got the recipe out of. Any idea?"

Draco stared at him and then at Hermione. "Did I hear right? You... you brewed Polyjuice Potion? In your second year?"

"Yes," was Hermione's simple answer.

"Whatever the hell for?!" Draco wanted to know and fell on the chair near the wardrobe. "In your second year! I can't believe it!"

"We wanted to know who the heir of Slytherin was," answered Hermione and looked through the book before putting it on the bed. "Do you remember when Crabbe and Goyle weren't their usual selves?"

Draco narrowed his eyes in thought. "You mean... when they didn't grunt and behave like trolls? When... one of them wore glasses just like... Harry! That... you were under Polyjuice then?"

"Right in one," smirked Harry. "We thought you were the heir of Slytherin then and tried to get some information from you. Hermione brewed the potion and Ron and I went to the Slytherin common room. Hermione was a bit... distracted."

"You can just say that I was spitting out fur balls at the time," grinned Hermione and Draco looked at her like she was crazy. "No, seriously. I collected cat hairs from Millicent Bulstrode's cloak and had to run around with a tail for over a week."

Draco smirked. "That's fitting."

Hermione rolled her eyes and stood up. Harry gave her a disappointed look but she ignored it and smacked him softly on the head when he stood up himself.

"We should get going. I'm afraid that if we wait any longer Mrs. Weasley will trash the kitchen," said Harry and grinned at Hermione.

"That's what I was going to say," she mumbled.

"I know love," he whispered into her ear. "I just wanted to be smart too."

"Come on lovebirds!" called Ron, who was already out the door without them noticing.

"Harry?" asked Hermione when he started to leave the room.

He turned around and saw her smiling from ear to ear. He raised his eyebrows questioningly.

"Don't you want to put a shirt on first? Personally I don't mind... but Mrs. Weasley will have a fit."

Harry groaned and retrieved a white shirt with silver lining from his wardrobe before finally going downstairs, his hand joined with Hermione's. When they reached the hallway they found Draco and Ron having a heated argument with the portrait of Mrs. Black.

"What's going on here?" asked Hermione and narrowed her eyes when Mrs. Black glared at her with malice. Mrs. Black looked from her to Harry and sighed while Ron and Draco huffed simultaneously and crossed their arms.

"Good day Lady Black," said Harry formally and bowed his head slightly. "Might I inquire what you are arguing about?"

She threw her hands over her head and glared around the room. "I wanted young Draco to see the errors of his ways! He is associating with blood-traitors and mudbloods, werewolves and muggle-lovers! This can't be tolerated from one of pure blood!"

"Lady Black!" snapped Harry angrily. "I won't hesitate to blow your portrait off the wall if you keep talking like that. No offence, but I thought you were a little bit smarter than that."

"What?!" she asked enraged. "But he is a descendant from the most Noble and Ancient House of Black!"

"And I will become Head of the Potter Family after Hogwarts, so what?" Harry wanted to know. "I'm descended from one of the old pure-blooded families as well and I don't act like a bigoted idiot!"

"But he is a Black now!" she raged.

"And so is your son Sirius." threw Hermione in. "You already drove him out of the family. If you keep harassing your own family like, soon there won't be any more Blacks left. Is that so hard to understand?"

Mrs. Black glared at her. "Who are you to tell me what to do mudblood?"

Harry, Ron and Draco had their wands out in an instant while Hermione looked angry and sad at the same time.

"Leave Hermione alone!" growled Ron angrily and Draco nodded.

"Don't insult my girlfriend again," said Harry in a dangerously low voice. "My patience is wearing thin and you are walking on very thin ice Lady Black. Now, I will tell you a little secret."

Mrs. Black looked at the three wands warily but said nothing.

"Your beloved Lord Voldemort who keeps rambling about blood purity is a half-blood himself," said Harry and Mrs. Black gasped. "He actually is lucky that he even has magic in his blood. His father was a muggle and his mother was a squib. So... why do you believe in someone like him?"

"Th-this can't be!" whispered Mrs. Black. "He is the heir of Salazar Slytherin. He can't be born to someone like that!"

"His true name is Tom Marvolo Riddle," said Draco. "And what Harry says is no lie. I once thought so myself. But take Hermione here for example, she is better than me – a pureblood – in school and get's every spell right the very first time she tries one."

Hermione smiled at Draco and Harry chuckled.

"Don't try to steal my girlfriend Draco," he warned playfully but with an undertone of seriousness.



Mrs. Black looked at each of them and then without another word the curtains around her painting closed.

"I think we gave her something to think about," mused Ron as he put his wand away. "She will hopefully be quiet for some time now."

"Thank god," said Hermione with relief. "Now... we really should go down to the kitchen."

"As you wish Milady," said Harry and opened the door with a bow. "After you."

Hermione smiled and passed him. When Draco and Ron wanted to follow her, Harry playfully wiggled his finger.

"I said Lady. I wasn't talking about you two," grinned Harry and closed the door behind him as he went down the stairs. He heard the two give an exasperated sigh and enter the kitchen when the door opened again.

"Ah, Harry. There you are. I thought we'd have to send a search-party out after you," greeted Sirius who sat there with his feet on the table.

"Here you three," said Mrs. Weasley and gave each of them an envelope. "Your letters. They are a bit late, but if you are quick I can get to Diagon Alley and buy your new things."

"Thank you Mrs. Weasley," said Harry and sat down next to Sirius. He opened the envelope and unfolded the letter.

Dear Mr. Potter,

The following is a list of the necessary items required for your fifth year at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Please note that the train leaves King's Cross Station, platform 9  $\frac{3}{4}$  on the 1st of September at precisely Eleven o'clock.

On a personal note: I talked to Professors' Vector and Babbling. You will be required to take a test in both Arithmancy and Ancient Runes on the 3rd of September after breakfast.

And congratulations on making Prefect. Please note that you have to attend the meeting on the Hogwarts Express where you will be instructed in your duties. It will take place in the first car of the train.

Sincerely,

Minerva McGonagall

Deputy Headmistress and Transfiguration teacher

Harry's jaw dropped when he read the last part of the letter and he quickly turned the envelope around. He paled when he saw a shimmering Prefect's badge that fell into his hand.

"Has Dumbledore gone nuts?" he asked quietly, and Sirius nearly fainted when he saw the badge.

Suddenly Hermione gave a scream of joy, dropped her letter and hugged him enthusiastically from the side.

"You too! Oh, Harry! I knew it! I knew you would be a Prefect too!" she said and all eyes in the room turned to the pair.

"Harry...", began Fred.

"-are you really...", continued George.

"A PREFECT?!" they asked together with wide eyes.

Harry tiredly waved the badge for everyone to see and leaned back in his chair.

"Wow, kiddo...", said Sirius who stared at him. "Your time spent sneaking around the castle at night is over now it seems. Congratulations."

Harry threw him a mild glare. "I don't know how Dumbledore can think that I'm suited for this position. I think he really is getting old..."

"Oh this is wonderful!" shouted Mrs. Weasley and gave him a hug when Hermione let go of him. "I'm so proud of you two. You will both do a very good job."

Harry grimaced when he heard some of his ribs being squished and patted her softly on the back. She smiled at him and then grabbed the book lists. She scanned them over and nodded.

"I will be back in an hour," she mumbled. "This is going to be expensive..."

Suddenly they heard a choking noise and they all looked over to Ron who was gaping at his letter with wide eyes.

"Has he finally lost it?" asked Draco casually and took the letter from him. He scanned through it and his eyes too widened in surprise. "How is this possible?"

"What is it?" questioned Hermione and carefully placed her badge on the table.

Draco said nothing and grabbed Ron's envelope. He turned it around and out fell a Prefect badge just like Harry's and Hermione's.

They both gasped and everyone else in the room stared at Ron open-mouthed.

"How?" asked Mrs. Weasley in a daze while the twins looked like they were having a heart attack.

Hermione frowned. "But... there are only two Prefects for every house... is this a mistake or something?"

"I got that position too, but I'm in Slytherin.", said Draco.

"Oh man...", sighed Sirius. "We are in the company of rule followers."

"Shut up Padfoot," said Harry lazily and locked eyes with Draco for a brief second. "It could be that it has something to do with the planned re-sorting..."

“WHAT?!” screamed Hermione. “There is a re-sorting?!” Her head snapped to Harry. “Why didn’t you tell me?!”

“Uh... I kinda forgot?” answered Harry sheepishly. “I really hadn’t thought about it since Snape told me... but I’m beginning to worry now...”

“I’m so proud of you!” gushed Mrs. Weasley after she finally snapped out of her daze. “Now everyone in the family has been a Prefect at some time!”

“And what about us?” asked George who seemed offended.

“Are we just some pets?” added George. “Or the nice little neighbours?”

Mrs. Weasley ignored them and asked Ron what he wanted to have as a present. Ron stared at her for a moment and then hesitantly asked if he could get his own broom.

Harry and Hermione smiled at each other while Draco was occupied with rolling his eyes and getting Hermione’s cat Crookshanks away from his leg. After Mrs. Weasley said that she would see what she could do about the broom, she hurried over to the cupboard and took a small bag of galleons out of it.

“Mrs. Weasley!” said Harry when she was at the door. “Please use the money from my vault for our stuff.”

He handed her his key, but she shook her head.

“No, Harry, I can’t do that. This is your money,” she tried to give the key back to him, but he was already back at the table.

“And you are going to buy mine and Hermione’s books too. So please take it. Pay for all the books with it. It’s the least I can do after you have always taken such good care of me,” he smiled.

"Thank you," she said after a short time and smiled back at him, before leaving the kitchen in a slight hurry.

"So...", said Sirius. "I hope you won't be abusing your new position."

Harry smiled innocently at him. "Never! How could you even think that?"

He chuckled. "Your parents sure would be proud. And I am too for that matter. I never would have thought that Dumbledore was that crazy! I mean... he is a bit odd, but that odd?" They shared a good laugh and Harry stood up again.

He looked at Ron and Hermione. "I think it is time to finish your training." Their eyes lit up and they hurried up the stairs before Harry and Draco even could react.

"I haven't seen Ronnikins that eager to learn... ever!" stated Fred surprised.

Harry just chuckled and waved at Sirius before they followed them up the stairs to the attic that they used for training.

When Harry and Draco arrived they saw Ron and Hermione already sitting on the floor and looking at them expectantly.

"Well then," said Harry. "Let's give your animagus transformations a try. I'm curious about what you will be as neither of you wants to tell anything about your form. I sure hope that you researched your forms enough."

"I did," nodded Ron. "And I bet you will be surprised."

"So did I.," smiled Hermione.

They began to concentrate, and Harry and Draco looked at each other as a blue light formed around Hermione and a red light around Ron. They had both seen this before. It wasn't common that someone began to glow like that while transforming. They had only witnessed it when they themselves had transformed.

With a sudden gust of wind Harry and Draco had to shield their eyes. Harry's eyes widened when he heard a loud trill that sounded just like...

"Phoenixes!" shouted Draco after the light had faded. "They are Phoenixes!"

And indeed they were. Where Ron had been sitting moments ago was a red Phoenix just like Fawkes with blue eyes hopping up and down. It looked like fire was dancing on his feathers.

In Hermione's spot, there was now standing a beautiful dark blue Phoenix with brown eyes and the feathers shimmered like water.

"A Water Phoenix and a Fire Phoenix," whispered Harry as he petted Hermione's now feathered head. "Now we're just missing the earth one. Remarkable!"

"Yeah," said Draco and their two friends changed back into their human form.

"And?" grinned Ron. "What do you have to say now?"

"This is... unusual," said Harry after a while and Hermione frowned.

"Why?" she asked. "Being a Phoenix is great! By the way... what are your forms anyways? You never told us."

Harry nodded at Draco and in the blink of an eye a majestic golden Phoenix was in his place. Ron's and Hermione's jaws dropped when Harry too changed into his black Phoenix form and trilled softly before changing back again.

"Wha... how?" asked Ron baffled. "You... you are Phoenixes too!"

Draco nodded. "I'm a Lightning Phoenix and Harry is a Shadow Phoenix. You know... it is very rare to change into a magical creature. And now... we have four of them. Phoenixes no less."

Hermione frowned. "Harry... you said something about just missing the Earth Phoenix. Do you think that... that it means something that we all have a Phoenix as our animagus forms? And different elements at that?"

Harry shrugged. "I really don't know but..." He grinned mischievously. "We will use the Time Turner now, and teach you how to fly. Then..."

After what had only been one hour for the other people in the house, Harry, Ron, Hermione and Draco left the attic and grinned at each other.

"Now there is an Order meeting taking place. Just the Professors, Sirius, Remus and the Weasleys are there. Let's get on with the show."

They all nodded and changed into their animagus forms. Harry as a Phoenix nudged Hermione's head softly and she trilled softly.

'We can talk to each other like this', trilled Harry happily and the brown eyes of the blue Phoenix widened.

'Wicked!' trilled the red Phoenix that was Ron as he flapped his wings.

Draco in his golden Phoenix form trilled, slightly annoyed. 'Are we ready now?'

Harry nodded his head and they all rose into the air. They had trained with Ron and Hermione for twelve hours so that they could learn how to fly and now they soared down to the kitchen and with a loud bang burst through the door.

All the people there had their wands drawn but dropped them to the ground when they saw just what had caused the loud entrance. Even Dumbledore's wand rolled down on the floor and his mouth was slightly open when he looked at the four different colored Phoenixes soaring over their heads.

"What? Who? How?" stuttered Remus who had recognized Harry and seemed to have made the connection to who the other ones were.

They all settled on the table in front of Dumbledore who had a bright twinkle in his eyes when he picked his wand off the floor.

“Incredible,” he remarked and petted each of them softly on the head.

They gave a trill and Sirius stood up to look at them better. He narrowed his eyes while everyone else was still gaping and then burst out laughing.

“I can’t believe it!” he laughed. “By Merlin’s Beard they are all Phoenixes!”

“What’s going on?” asked Mr. Weasley in awe while staring at the four birds.

Remus joined Sirius’ side. “If I have this right...,” he said while looking at each of them. “This is...,” he pointed at the red Phoenix. “... your son Ron. And this...,” he pointed at the blue one, “... is Hermione, while this one...,” he then pointed at the golden Phoenix, “... is Draco and the last one...,” he petted the black Phoenix, “...is Harry.”

“My son Ron is an animagus?! And a Phoenix too? All of them are Phoenixes?!”

The Phoenixes trilled and rose into the air again. With a loud thundering noise the golden one disappeared with a flash of lightning and the other three flew out of the kitchen through the door.

When they were all sitting in Harry’s room in their human forms again, they started laughing.

“Did you see their faces?!” asked Ron and wiped away some tears. “Fred and George nearly fainted!”

Hermione giggled. “Even Dumbledore dropped his wand.”

Harry meanwhile, glared daggers at Draco. “How do you do it?!”

“What?” the blond asked innocently. “Do you mean flashing?”



“YES!” shouted Harry. “I can’t get it right and you make it seem so easy! But nooo, you won’t even give me a little hint!”

“I won’t tell you,” smirked Draco. “Unless you still haven’t gotten it by Christmas.”

Harry pouted. This sure wouldn’t be an easy task. But on the other hand would he have the help of Hermione now so he just had to work together with her and Ron.

“Well then. Let’s head into our own rooms then,” said Hermione.

“Yeah,” added Ron. “I’m knackered after twelve hours of training.”

“Goodnight,” said Harry and kissed Hermione passionately.

She nodded and kissed him back before leaving the room, followed by Ron and Draco who each gave him a pat on the back.

Harry flicked his wand to change his clothes and slipped under the covers. After the training, he too was tired and drifted off to sleep after no more than five minutes

On the day of the 1st of September, a group of eight people made their way through the station at King’s Cross. They were attracting attention, but not because of looking out of place, but because of their confidence and clothing.

The adults; Mr. Weasley, Mrs. Weasley, Remus and Tonks were chatting quietly and a huge black dog was running around like crazy, but nearly everyone of them looked at the four teens that were walking alongside them.

All four of them now wore new robes that Harry had secretly gotten for them in Diagon Alley. Ron and Hermione had protested at first, but after some coaxing from Harry, had accepted them as late birthday presents for the last year. Draco, of course, didn’t get any robes from Harry, because he already had a whole room full of them.

Harry was now wearing a dark green shirt with a black and silver Phoenix that curved itself from his right arm, over his torso and back, a pair of worn out black jeans with a silver belt, some comfortable black dragon hide boots, and a midnight black cloak.

The black Phoenix pendant with emerald eyes he had gotten from Fleur hung around his neck and he smiled when he remembered that now every one of them had a pendant of the same sort. His prefect badge was shimmering on his chest.

Hermione wore very tight fitting dark blue jeans and a white top with a dark blue and white Phoenix that curled around her waist and back, and a dark blue cloak, together with white boots. Like Harry, she wore her own Phoenix pendant. Hers was a shimmering blue with brown eyes and her prefect badge was pinned to her robe.

Draco and Ron were wearing the same clothes as Harry. Draco's shirt was black with a gold and gray-colored Phoenix, gray jeans, gray boots and a very dark gold cloak. He too had a pendant in gold and silver.

Ron's shirt was white with a red and orange Phoenix; he wore blue jeans, dark red boots and a dark red cloak. His pendant was red with blue eyes.

All in all it looked like they were wearing some sort of uniform. And that was what they had intended. They wanted everyone to know, that they were friends now and stuck together. And other than themselves and the Order, no one would get the real meaning of their pendants and shirts.

Of course their cloaks were invisible to the muggles around them so that they wouldn't be considered insane for wearing something like that.

They casually stepped through the wall between platforms nine and ten, and arrived at platform 9  $\frac{3}{4}$ .

They stood on the platform and smiled brightly when they saw the Hogwarts Express waiting there in all its glory and the curious looks

the other students were giving them. Why shouldn't they? They didn't look like ordinary fifth years now and everyone seemed to recognize the new fourth member of the Trio in disbelief after a second look.

Harry smiled. "I think our time as the 'Golden Trio' is over, don't you think?"

Draco smirked. "Yeah. It looks like that. I never liked that nickname you three had. It reminded me entirely too much of Gryffindor."

"Well then," said Ron. "We have a train to catch."

"Hogwarts here we come again!" they chorused together and laughed.

So that was the tenth chapter.

I hope you liked it.

Don't forget the Reviews! I need feedback!!!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 11

"Well then..." said Harry with a big smile while scratching the huge black dog behind the ears. "Let's get a compartment."

"Be careful you four," said Remus and bent down to the black dog.

"Always," smirked Draco.

"You know us," added Ron smiling.

"Yes..." said Mr. Weasley slowly, "...and that's the problem."

Harry pouted and Hermione led the way to the end of the train where a single compartment was still empty except for a girl with blond hair that was reading a magazine upside down. Somehow they always ended up in the same one.

The train gave a warning noise and they jumped on while waving to the adults. When the train started to leave, Harry bent down to the black dog one last time.

"Don't do anything stupid Padfoot. I'm gonna miss you."

The dog barked and licked his hand before he went back to stand by the other adults. They waved until they couldn't see the station anymore then leaned back in their seats.

"So... who is that?" asked Ron a little uncomfortably as he looked at the blond girl. She had her wand tucked behind her ear and seemed to be totally engrossed in her magazine. All in all she looked very strange.

She didn't look up but Harry saw a slight smile on her face when she suddenly spoke up. "My name is Luna Lovegood."

Harry bowed his head. "It's a pleasure to meet you Luna. I'm-"

"I know who you are," she said and looked at each of them with big blue eyes. "You are Harry Potter. And your companions are Ronald Weasley, Hermione Granger and Draco Black."

Draco looked at her in bafflement and sat down. "How do you know I changed my name?"

"The nargels told me....," she answered and seemed to look right through him.

'Nargels?' mouthed Draco to Harry who grinned slightly.

He sat down and looked at the magazine that Luna had been reading. He saw that it was called The Quibbler and chuckled. "Why are you reading it upside down?"

She smiled. "I was doing a crossword. If you read it like that it shows a spell to detect Willybadis."

"What the heck are Willybadis?" asked Ron perplexed.

"Oh please," huffed Hermione. "Those aren't actual creatures. This magazine is writing about lots of stuff that doesn't exist."

"My dad is the Editor," said Luna and picked the magazine up again.

Hermione blushed. "Sorry. I didn't mean to offend you..."

Luna said nothing and they looked at each other. Draco shrugged and enlarged his trunk to take out a book. Suddenly the door opened and Neville Longbottom, followed by Ginny stood there. Harry raised an eyebrow when he saw that he was carrying a strange pulsing plant in his arms that looked a little bit like a cactus. Ginny grinned at him and entered the compartment.

"Can... we sit here? Everywhere e-else is full....," asked Neville shyly.

"Of course Nev," smiled Harry. "Have a seat."

Neville stared at him. "H-harry? Is that... you?"

Harry shook his head. "Naw... I'm just an evil imposter under Polyjuice. Harry is sitting in my seven compartment trunk."

"Um... okay?" said Neville, suddenly wanting to leave.

Ginny grabbed him by the arm and led him to a free seat. "He is just joking. Of course this is Harry."

Neville greeted Ron and Hermione and when his eyes fell on Draco he nearly fell off his seat.

"Wh-what a-are you d-doing here?" he stuttered wide eyed.

"Relax Longbottom. I'm not going to eat you. At least not now..." said Draco smirking. "I'm sitting here with my friends reading a book as you can see."

Neville stared at him. "B-but..." he looked at Harry. "But Malfoy?"

"Is really my friend, and no longer goes by the name Malfoy. He is Draco Black now."

Neville said nothing and Hermione leaned forward to look at the strange plant he was carrying like a precious baby. "What is that Neville?"

Neville smiled proudly. "This is a Mimulus Mimbeltonia. I got it from Gran for my birthday. She said since I'm really good at Herbology I should try to raise my own plant and help it survive until next summer."

Ron eyed the plant carefully as it pulsed. "Is it... dangerous?"

Neville shook his head. "No. But it has an awesome self-protecting mechanism. Do you want to see it?" He took a sharp quill out of his cloak and Harry shook his head.

"Sorry Nev, but we have to go to the Prefect's meeting."

His eyes widened. "Oh! I nearly forgot about that! Where was it supposed to be held again?"

Draco looked at him oddly and Neville cowered in his seat. "Do you want to tell us... that you are a Prefect too?"

Neville nodded shyly and showed them the badge on his chest. "Y-yes. I got the badge with my letter."

Hermione looked at Harry. "So we have... four Gryffindor Prefects? I sure doubt that this happened by accident."

Harry shrugged and smiled at Neville. "Then come on. The meeting is being held in the first car of the train. And we don't want to miss such an interesting thing now, do we?"

Ron snorted and they left Ginny and Luna alone in the compartment with the promise to return as soon as possible. Ginny nodded and started to play with Crookshanks who was curled at her feet, and Luna just nodded absently.

Harry regretted being made a Prefect the second they entered the compartment and had to listen to a long-winded speech about the responsibilities and rules from the Head Boy and Head Girl. He looked at Hermione and even she seemed to be bored out of her mind after only five minutes.

Thirty minutes later the Head Boy, Roger Davies, took out a scroll and looked at each of them.

"Well... it's a little bit strange that there are ten Prefects now. Normally there are only six, but Professor Dumbledore assured me in his letter that it is correct. So... he sent me ten scrolls with the planned patrols that you will be responsible for during the term. Read it carefully this evening before you go to bed."

He handed out the scrolls and started another long lecture about the things they had to do on a patrol. Even Hermione didn't bother to listen, and Harry poked her softly in the side and she had to try not to

laugh. She swatted his hand away and Harry heard Neville chuckle quietly when she softly whacked him on the head.

He pouted and she looked around and gave him a quick kiss on the cheek. Harry looked at Neville out of the corner of his eye and saw that his eyes were wide now. Harry grinned at him and he looked away quickly.

"Neville sure has a problem with confidence," whispered Hermione, who had seen Neville's reaction, in Harry's ear.

Harry nodded. "Yeah... but he's a good guy."

Hermione nodded and they both looked at the ceiling as if praying for Roger Davies' rant to end. After another half an hour he dismissed them and they quickly hurried out of the compartment. Harry stopped when they were outside and looked at Draco.

"Um... where is Ron?" he asked.

Draco slapped his forehead. "Damn... wait a minute."

He disappeared into the compartment again and a short time later dragged a sleepy looking Ron out of it.

"Sorry guys," he said sheepishly. "I fell asleep in there."

They shared a good laugh and went back into their compartment to join Ginny and Luna again. Neville followed them and quietly sat down near the door.

"Hermione I'm astonished," said Harry playfully when they had closed the door. "You didn't even try to listen to our dear Head Boy. Who are you and what have you done with my bossy, rule-following girlfriend?"

Hermione sat down near the window. "Well... when I'm around you the normal rules don't apply. I thought you had already noticed that."



Harry chuckled and sat down next to her. He had to stifle a big yawn when he looked out of the window. He hadn't really slept much last night because of his worries about Voldemort.

"Is someone tired?" whispered Hermione in his ear when Draco and Ron started to play a game of chess while Neville and Ginny took out some exploding snap cards.

Harry sighed and rubbed his forehead. "You don't know how much..."

Hermione grabbed his shoulders and slowly laid his head down onto her lap. Harry looked up at her and smiled and she bent down and gave him a small kiss.

He could see the concern in her eyes now. "But you haven't had any nightmares, have you?"

"No," said Harry and breathed in her scent. "Not anymore."

"So V-voldemort has nothing to do with it?" she asked and Harry closed his eyes when she started to massage his temples softly.

"He can't get through my Occlumency shields," he answered. "I felt him try it once, but he no longer can access my mind like he did before I finished my transformation."

Hermione stiffened and Harry opened his eyes to see her looking at him in alarm. "He tried to access your mind? What did he do?"

"I don't really know..." mumbled Harry. "... it was like I was running through a long corridor with black walls. I have no clue if it was accidental or if he wanted me to see it on purpose."

Hermione looked at him and then smiled softly. "I think you really should sleep a bit."

Harry nodded and closed his eyes again. "I must say, you are the most comfortable pillow I have ever had."

"Prat," she whispered and gave him another kiss on the forehead.

"Hermione?" asked Neville quietly after a while.

Harry felt Hermione move a little bit. "Yes?"

"Are you... are you and Harry a couple?"

He felt Hermione's hands in his hair and smiled when she answered. "Yes. I believe we are. He asked me to be his girlfriend over the holidays."

Neville said nothing else and Harry felt himself slowly drifted off to sleep.

"Harry?" he heard Hermione's voice. "Come on, wake up. We are nearly at Hogwarts."

He mumbled something incoherent and turned his head around.

"Please. Wake up honey," she said and Harry's eyes opened immediately.

"What did you call me?" he asked sleepily and sat up.

Hermione grinned at him. "It was the best way to get your attention. It worked, didn't it?"

"Um... well... yeah," he said and rubbed his head after she had given him a kiss.

With a flick of his wand they were all wearing their black school cloaks and Harry looked at Neville and broke out laughing.

He was black from head to toe and Ginny sat in front of him and was grinning from ear to ear.

"I lost seven times in exploding snap," Neville explained and tried to wish the ash away.

Hermione swished her wand and Neville now looked presentable again. Harry was still chuckling when the train started to slow, and grinned when it stopped at the station in Hogsmeade.

"Well then. Let's get a carriage," suggested Draco after he had shrunk his trunk again.

Harry looked at the horse-less carriages and stopped in his tracks. Where before there had been nothing pulling them, now there were some horse-like creatures with big wings. You could see every bone in their body under their leather-like skin, but somehow they still looked friendly.

He shook his head when Luna was suddenly next to him. "I can see them too, you know."

"You can?" asked Harry quietly when the others entered the carriage.

She nodded. "Yes."

Harry smiled sadly and patted one of the creatures carefully on the head. "These are Thestrals. You can only see them if you have seen death. Do you mind if I ask..."

"I saw my mother die," she explained. "She was experimenting with potions and one of them went horribly wrong."

"I'm sorry," he said.

She smiled at him and entered the carriage. "It was long ago."

Harry was silent for the rest of the ride to the castle, and realised where he was just as they entered the Great Hall where most of the students were already seated.

Dumbledore stood up when all students, including the new first years, were in the Hall and raised his hands. "It is a pleasure to see you all again this year and great to have some new faces here as well. I won't take up too much of your time, but I do have an announcement to make before the sorting starts."

The students started whispering and the Headmaster raised his hands again. "This year we will have a re-sorting; some of the older students have shown that they are better suited for houses other than the ones they are currently placed in. The re-sorting will only be for fifth years and above, so fourth years and below don't have to worry."

Professor McGonagall stepped forwards with the sorting hat and a stool. She carefully placed the hat on top of it and it immediately started to sing its song.

In times of old, when I was new  
and Hogwarts barely started  
the founders of our noble school  
thought never to be parted.  
United by a common goal  
they had the selfsame yearning  
to make the world's best magic school  
and pass along their learning.  
"Together we will build and teach"  
The four good friends decided.  
And never did they dream that they  
might some day be divided.  
For were there such friends anywhere  
as Slytherin and Gryffindor?  
Unless it was the second pair  
of Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw  
so how could it have gone so wrong?  
How could such friendships fail?  
Why, I was there, so I can tell  
the whole sad, sorry tale.  
Said Slytherin, "We'll teach just those  
whose ancestry's purest."  
Said Ravenclaw, "We'll teach those whose  
intelligence is surest"  
Said Gryffindor, "We'll teach all those  
with brave deeds to their name."  
Said Hufflepuff, "I'll teach the lot  
and treat them just the same."  
These differences caused little strife

when first they came to light.  
for each of the four founders had  
a house in which they might  
take only those they wanted, so,  
for instance, Slytherin  
took only pure-blood wizards  
Of great cunning just like him.  
And only those of sharpest mind  
were taught by Ravenclaw  
While the bravest and the boldest  
went to daring Gryffindor.  
Good Hufflepuff, she took the rest  
and taught them all she knew  
thus, the Houses and their founder's  
maintained friendships firm and true.

So Hogwarts worked in harmony  
for several happy years  
but then discord crept among us  
feeding on our faults and fears.

The Houses that, like pillars four  
had once held up our school  
now turned upon each other and  
divided, sought to rule.  
And for a while it seemed the school  
must meet an early end.  
What with duelling and with fighting  
and the clash of friend on friend.  
And at last there came a morning  
when old Slytherin departed  
and though the fighting then died out  
he left us quite downhearted.  
And never since the founders four  
were whittled down to three  
have the Houses been united  
as they once were meant to be.

And now the Sorting Hat is here  
and you all know the score;

I sort you into Houses  
because that is what I'm for.  
But this year I'll go further,  
listen closely to my song:  
though condemned I am to split you  
still I worry that it's wrong,  
though I must fulfil my duty  
and must quarter every year  
still I wonder whether sorting  
may not bring the end I fear.

But first I must remind you  
of the oldest house that's here.

The Phoenixes will rise again  
and teach the Darkness fear.

But not everyone of the Chosen  
will be in this old house,  
they are the key, so listen well:

Bring unity to the house.

When Shadow, Earth and Water  
unite in their great fight,

Light and also Fire

will stand then on their right.

With snakes, ravens, lions and badgers  
they have the chance to empower

So hear me out, hear what I shout:

Together you have great power

Oh, know the perils, read the signs  
the warning history shows  
for our Hogwarts is in danger  
from external, deadly foes  
and we must unite inside her  
or we'll crumble from within

I have told you, I have warned you...  
let the Sorting now begin.

The hall was silent, no one started clapping as they always did, and not a sound was heard but for a few whisperings, and Harry, Ron, Draco and Hermione looked at each other.

"Did the hat just give us a warning of some sort?" asked Ron quietly.

"Brilliant observation weasel," retorted Draco as he rolled his eyes.

Harry looked around the hall and saw that most of the students had frowns on their faces. But no one seemed to really grasp what the hat had wanted to tell them with its song. He frowned when he thought about the song. What were the last three verses about? It sounded like it had something to do with their animagus forms...

Hermione nodded. "Yes... not only that. Harry? Did you hear what it also told us?"

He nodded. "I think this year will be more interesting than I first thought it would be."

Professor McGonagall stepped forward again and held her list up. "First the older students will be re-sorted. But again, only fifth years and above. Please line up in front of the podium."

Silence greeted her statement while the students positioned themselves in front of the small first years.

McGonagall nodded when they were all assembled. Harry was still thinking about the song from by the hat when he felt Hermione give his hand a light squeeze. He smiled at her and looked back towards the front as McGonagall called the first name.

“Bones, Susan!”

The hat took some time with her and finally shouted: “GRYFFINDOR!”

Harry smiled when the younger Gryffindors broke into applause and he, Draco, Ron and Hermione joined in.

“Black, Draco!” read McGonagall.

Whispers broke out in the hall when Draco stepped forward. Harry guessed that it had something to do with Draco’s new surname. Well... of course there was also the fact that Draco now had the name of a convicted murderer and the big question was why he had it.

Harry nearly laughed out loud when after not even twenty seconds had passed, the hat announced Draco’s new... old house.

“SLYTHERIN!”

Hermione nudged him with her elbow. “Why did he even have to go up there? It was pretty clear anyway.”

“Granger, Hermione!” called McGonagall, which shut Hermione up.

Harry squeezed Hermione’s hand and she smiled cockily at him before she went up and sat down on the stool.

Harry, just like the rest of the hall waited for the hat’s decision, but it seemed to be having a little chat with Hermione, so it took longer than expected.

Finally after two minutes the hat shouted out.

“RAVENCLAW!”



The hall cheered and the Ravenclaws seemed to be really pleased to have Hermione in their house now. Harry smiled. Of course a brilliant witch like her would be a very good addition for them.

“Longbottom, Neville!”

Neville hesitantly stepped forward and Harry raised his eyebrows in amusement when he saw that he was still carrying the Mimbulus Mimbeltania. He could see that he was shaking a bit and sighed. The boy sure had a confidence problem...

“HUFFLEPUFF!” shouted the hat after a short time and the badgers clapped.

Professor Sprout, who was the Head of Hufflepuff, seemed to be the most pleased and Harry guessed that it was because of Neville’s talent in Herbology.

“Potter, Harry!” called McGonagall and everyone quieted down instantly.

Harry slowly made his way to the stool and sat down. McGonagall smiled sadly at him and then placed the hat on his head.

‘Well, well Mr. Potter, I see you have changed quite a bit since our last chat,’ said the hat with a slightly amused voice.

Harry chuckled and decided just to think about what he wanted to say. ‘You could say that.’

‘Then let’s see what we’ve got here,’ replied the hat. ‘Courage and bravery... a Gryffindor for sure, and you have become quite smart too. Definitely a trait for Ravenclaw where young Ms. Granger now resides... and you are loyal to your friends and those you hold dear, just like Mr. Longbottom. Well that’s a trait for Hufflepuff. But you also have become ambitious and cunning. How very Slytherin of you Mr. Potter. But no...’

‘I guess you already made up your mind?’ Harry wanted to know.

'That I did,' answered the hat. 'I told you before that you could become great in Slytherin. And now I won't let you choose.'

Harry sighed quietly. 'I guess arguing with you won't change your decision?'

The hat seemed to snort. A really odd noise. 'Not this time! Now I will put you where you belong! And no whining! Think about what I told you in my song.'

Harry thought about it a little bit and then a small smirk made its way to his face. 'Very well.'

The hat seemed surprised for a short moment but then Harry felt how it moved and he thought he could nearly feel the tension that was in the air. He adjusted the hat a little bit so that he could see the people in the Great Hall and winked at Hermione who was now seated at the Ravenclaw table, who just gave him a knowing smile. He gave a short nod to Ron who was still standing in the line of waiting students and he nodded back a bit hesitantly. And lastly he looked at Draco and smirked. The newest Black immediately understood.

'Then my decision will be final,' stated the hat. 'Maybe there is a chance for you to bring the houses with the help of your friends, back together again.'

Harry nodded. 'Maybe.'

The hat sounded like it was taking a deep breath...

"PHOENIX!"

Silence greeted the hat's announcement and Harry smiled while giving McGonagall the hat back with a small bow. She stared at him but a small smile tugged at her lips

"It was nice to be in your house Professor," he stated formally for everyone to hear. "But I'm afraid that I am no longer one of the lions."

“That’s alright Mr. Potter,” she answered and everyone looked at her in disbelief. “I hope you do well in your new house. It seems that you are a Phoenix now.”

Harry chuckled. “Just wanted to make sure.”

With that - to the immense surprise of all the students - Snape started clapping, followed by Dumbledore, Hagrid, Draco, Hermione and Ron.

Harry bowed and everyone else started clapping too. He gave Ron a pat on the back when he passed him along with a slight smile.

Just then a new table appeared in the Great Hall and Harry – just like everyone else – looked at the banner that now hung over the fifth table that was situated between the Gryffindor and the Slytherin table. It had a beautiful crest in green, red, yellow, blue, silver, gold, black and bronze. The colors of all the four other houses. In the middle was a majestic white Phoenix who spread its wings.

He felt a small surge of magic and looked down at his black cloak to see that the normally red trim was now white and the crest on his chest had also changed.

He smiled widely and sat down at the new table. He knew that all eyes were on him now, but he just ignored them and took a sip out of his goblet.

Harry choked slightly at the unexpected taste of wine and looked at Dumbledore whose eyes were twinkling madly.

He raised his head when it was Ron’s turn. The hat took only twenty seconds just like with Draco and then shouted out loud.

“GRYFFINDOR!”

He clapped just like everyone else but was a little bit distracted now. He couldn’t be the only member of this new house, could he?

“Weasley, Fred! And... well why not make it short, George too!” called McGonagall chuckling.

Fred grabbed the hat and five seconds later George grabbed it as well. When they both handed it back to a confused McGonagall with a wide grin it shouted: "PHOENIX!"

Harry looked at them as they came jumping over to him and positioned themselves at each side of him.

"Well what do you think of that?" asked Fred and patted him on the back.

"We are in this new house together," added George and whooped when he realised that there was wine in his goblet.

At the end of the sorting Harry was surprised to find himself in the company of people he would never have guessed he'd be in the same house with.

Included in his house were: Blaise Zabini, a tall black boy with high cheekbones, Terry Boot, a chubby looking boy, Hannah Abbott, a red-haired girl, Padma Patil, the twin sister of Parvati, Daphne Greengrass, a pretty blond-haired girl, Ernie Macmillan, a boy with red and blond hair and the Weasley Twins. And last but not least, two first years. A girl named Rose Zeller and a boy named Euan Abercrombie.

"This certainly is... interesting," said Harry while they all stared at each other and Dumbledore stood up again.

"So now that the re-sorting and sorting of the new first years is finished and we have the addition of the new house Phoenix, I would like to introduce your new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher," said Dumbledore. "Please welcome Professor Dolores Jane Umbridge."

Harry looked at the toad-like woman while a few students half-heartedly clapped and sighed.

"Oh dear...," said Padma when the new Professor stood up and started to rant.

Harry tuned her out after not even twenty seconds and looked at the other students that were sitting with him.

"So... do you think she will be a good teacher?" asked Ernie to no one in particular.

Blaise shook his head and sipped at his wine with delight. "If her lessons are like that, I doubt it. She was probably a Hufflepuff when she was in school..."

"Hey!" cried Hannah offended. "Hufflepuff isn't so bad you know!"

"Well... the Puffs are all a bit odd," added Daphne with a smirk and flicked her hair back a bit arrogantly.

"And the Slytherins are just arrogant and slimy snakes!" retorted Ernie growling.

"Guys...", said Harry quietly and looked at each of them. "Do you think you can drop the superior act? We are in one house together now. If you ask me the sorting hat has gone nuts, but we are two ex-Slytherins, two ex-Hufflepuffs, two ex-Ravenclaws and three ex-Gryffindors in one house. And don't forget the new first years," he added and winked at the two kids that looked like they were watching a tennis match. "We have to stick together now."

"Whatever you say," grumbled Terry and sighed. "But I guess you are right. I just don't understand why we never heard of this house before. Not even in 'Hogwarts a History' is anything written about it."

Harry chuckled. "See? We have all the traits of the four houses united in one. Don't you think we should make something out of it instead of fighting?"

Blaise looked at him with narrowed eyes. "Can I ask you a question Potter?"

He nodded and sipped at his wine again while looking at Umbridge who was now talking about a better future for the students.

"I noticed you and Draco hanging out together. How is that?"

Harry put his goblet down and looked at the black boy. "We are friends."

"How is this possible?" Padma wanted to know and everyone else stared at him with wide eyes.

He sighed dramatically and smirked at the ex-Slytherins. "We both saw what we could gain out of this friendship at the end of last year and here we are."

"You've changed Potter," remarked Blaise. "Not just in looks but you seem... different."

"Well thanks," replied Harry and gave a sigh of relief when Umbridge finally sat down.

Dumbledore coughed. "Well... after that very interesting speech. I have to make one last announcement regarding the new house. Um... I'm sorry to say, but I have no clue where the common room might be..."

The students chuckled and Harry closed his eyes. He frowned when he felt three pairs of eyes on him but relaxed when he realized that it was Hermione, Ron and Draco. He didn't know why but suddenly he saw the corridor on the seventh floor that led to the Gryffindor tower, but something was missing... there was a Portrait of some sort where he knew there wasn't supposed to be one. There normally was something else...

He opened his eyes in realisation. Of course! The tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy, who tried to teach ballet to the trolls!

Harry coughed. "Headmaster?" he asked, and all eyes turned to him. "I know where the common room of the Phoenixes' is."

Dumbledore looked at him for a moment and then smiled. "Very well. So my guess was right then... let's eat!"

"How do you know where the Common Room is?" asked Ernie in interest while they filled their plates.

Harry shrugged. "I'm a Prefect. I think it has something to do with that."

Daphne looked at him oddly. "Do you think... that it is on the seventh floor where normally the tapestry of that fool Barnabas is?"

Harry's eyes widened. "Yes. How do you know that?"

She showed him the badge on her robe. "I'm a Prefect too and I kind of saw it in my head."

Harry looked up to Dumbledore who was munching a chicken leg and raised his eyebrows. They sure had a lot to talk about when Harry met with him after dinner.

After thirty minutes it was time to leave and Harry left the Prefect duties to Daphne because of the planned meeting with Dumbledore. He stretched his arms and stood up with a nod to the Headmaster who understood and he left the Great Hall.

He went up to the gargoyle that was located at the entrance of Dumbledore's office and didn't have to wait long for the Professor to show up.

"Well then my boy, let's get started," said Dumbledore smiling and looked at the gargoyle. "Lemon Drop," Harry nodded and they went up the moving staircase together.

As you can see I changed some parts of the Poll, because many of you seemed to like the idea of a new house and it just fits for my story. So those who wanted Harry in Slytherin, please don't be mad. His attitude won't change because of the new house.

Keep reading!

The song of the sorting hat is out of the OotP and belongs to J. K. Rowling. I just added two verses.

I hope you liked it!

Review please!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin



## Chapter 12

Harry entered Dumbledore's office and smiled when he saw Fawkes sitting on his perch near the window. The Phoenix trilled and looked at him curiously, but then nodded his head as if to say he accepted Harry.

"Well then Harry," said Dumbledore as he sat down behind his desk. "I believe you have some questions before we come to the real reason for our meeting."

Harry nodded and sat down on a conjured chair in front of the desk. "You knew it sir, didn't you?"

Dumbledore's eyes twinkled when he smiled at Harry. "Excuse me, but what did I know my boy? I don't think I'm following you."

Harry snorted. "Professor. Do you really want to tell me that you had no clue about Phoenix House, and which house we all would be re-sorted into when you sent us the Prefect badges?"

"Oh, you mean the fact that you, Miss Granger, Mr. Weasley and Mr. Black are all in different houses now?" asked Dumbledore, and Harry just nodded with a small smile on his face. "Indeed, I knew that it would come to this. I asked the sorting hat what I should do about the Prefects and he told me where he would put you."

"So... what is this all about?" Harry wanted to know. "I've never heard of the Phoenix House before."

Dumbledore leaned back in his chair and folded his fingers. "You see Harry, the ancient House of Phoenix started shortly before any of the other houses. The four founders, Godric, Rowena, Helena and Salazar, had only the one house at first and all the students were in it together.

You must realize that there were only around fifty students at that time, so there was really no point in putting them in different houses. They were all in Phoenix House, so house pride and inner-house rivalry were very uncommon. There was competition, yes; but no

rivalry or hatred. The motto was; 'All for one'. But you know how people act." Dumbledore popped a Lemon Drop into his mouth and Harry nodded.

"They started having differences and the founders began to play favourites, I believe," he said.

"Exactly," answered Dumbledore who seemed pleased. "Salazar Slytherin was the first to take the cunning and ambitious under his special guidance. Rowena Ravenclaw soon followed, and taught those with above average intelligence. Godric Gryffindor took those who were the bravest under his wing, and Helga Hufflepuff took all the rest. The Phoenix House no longer held any value because slowly the four known houses formed and the Phoenixes broke apart."

Harry furrowed his brow. "But why now? Why did the sorting hat decide that the House of Phoenix should come forth again? After more than a thousand years?"

Dumbledore smiled again. "Think, my boy. I'm sure you already know the answer."

Harry looked at the Professor deep in thought. He heard a quiet trill and then looked over at Fawkes who was staring at him as if to tell him that he was really being stupid for not seeing the answer. Then it clicked.

"Because... the Phoenixes have risen again..." he whispered and looked up. "We are the Phoenixes. Draco, Hermione, Ron and I. Is it that?"

Dumbledore nodded. "You all are in different houses now. Every one of you has the different traits of the four houses, but just those who have all four united inside of them are chosen for the House of Phoenix."

"You mean... that the Phoenix stands for something like... unity?" Harry asked.

"You heard the song our dear Gideon sang."

Harry stared at him. "Gideon? Who's... wait! The sorting hat has a name?"

Dumbledore chuckled. "Of course he has. You can't exist for over a thousand years without a name. Godric himself named him."

"So... Gideon was really the hat of Godric Gryffindor?" Harry asked. "Is it because of that, that I was able to draw the Sword of Gryffindor out of it... him?"

"Yes," said Dumbledore as he popped another lemon drop into his mouth. "But do you understand what the House of Phoenix means?"

Harry smiled. "That we have the chance to empower, because together we have great power."

"I see you really listened well to the song," said Dumbledore cheerfully. "Be that as it may, we have a new house and need to arrange some things. There is the question about the Head of House of course and the schedules. Oh, and we should not forget the Quidditch team now, should we?"

Harry grinned. "Professor, I think the Quidditch team won't be a problem. We already have three players in our house. I don't know about the other ones though. There are only eleven of us so it is a bit complicated."

"Indeed," said Dumbledore. "I think you should come up with something together with the Weasley Twins. Who do you think your Head of House should be?"

"You are asking me?" Harry wanted to know, and gave him a piercing stare. "Strange. You never cared about my opinion before."

"I know...," replied the Headmaster. "And I regret not having done so. Asking for your opinion was something I should have done the moment you first set foot onto Hogwarts grounds."

Harry raised his eyebrows. "I was eleven years old then and had no clue about the wizarding world. About what could you have asked my opinion, Sir?"

Dumbledore looked down at his desk. "Maybe what you thought about your living arrangements; what your first impression of our world was, and so on... I know now that your relatives didn't treat you the way they should have. I wanted you to grow up away from magic and live a normal childhood."

Harry snorted. "I'll eat my broom if anyone ever has a normal childhood with the Dursleys around. I would give that person the Order of Merlin, First Class, just for surviving."

Dumbledore eyed him sadly. "So now do you see what I mean?"

Harry nodded slowly. "Yeah... but you can't change it now Professor."

Dumbledore nodded and they were both silent for a short moment. Dumbledore coughed quietly and stood up. "I will see who is available to be a Head of House. And now..."

Harry just looked at him out of the corner of his eye because he was involved in a staring contest with Fawkes right at that moment. Or so it would have looked to anyone else. Harry was desperately trying to speak to Fawkes in his head like he had read Phoenix could do. And now he was an animagus, so it had to be possible to do it.

"Harry?" asked Dumbledore and his head snapped around because he hadn't seen that the Headmaster was behind his desk again.

"Sorry Professor. I wanted to try something," he pouted in Fawkes' direction and the Phoenix trilled in amusement.

Dumbledore chuckled and placed a stone bowl covered with runic symbols onto his desk. Harry looked at it and then up at Dumbledore with a slightly worried look.

"That is a Pensieve... I thought we were just going to talk about some things," said Harry quietly.

Dumbledore looked at him over his half moon spectacles. "Under normal circumstances yes, but of course where you are concerned, nothing is ever normal."

Harry nodded. "Professor, please tell me... why did you keep the prophecy a secret from me? I already guessed that it has to be about me, because I'm the only one Voldemort has marked as his equal." He touched his forehead and sighed. "Is it just because of this scar that I'm the Boy-Who-Lived?"

Dumbledore smiled sadly. "I see you have already given it much thought." He folded his fingers again. "You have to know that a part of the prophecy has already been fulfilled. Voldemort has marked you as his equal. The one who was born when the seventh month died to parents who thrice defeated him."

"But why me and not Neville?" asked Harry suddenly. "His parents also defeated Voldemort three times and he was born just one day before me."

Dumbledore tilted his head and nodded. "That is a question I've asked myself quite a lot in the last few years. The answer is simple I think; it was totally random. But I guess that he chose you because it was widely known in the magical community that the Potter's son displayed accidental magic at just three months old."

"Professor?" Harry threw in. "There could be something else. What if... what if Voldemort chose a half-blood like himself instead of the pure-blood?"

Dumbledore looked at him. "Indeed that could be one reason, now let's get to the prophecy. But first Harry... I'm curious. Who told you about it?"

Harry remained silent while debating how much he should tell him. "Professor, I think you will somehow find out for yourself, so I won't tell you."

A smile came to Dumbledore's lips and he nodded before his expression turned serious. "Now... as you may know, the prophecy is located deep inside the Ministry of Magic. It is in the Department of Mysteries to be exact. That is a highly restricted area that no one is allowed to enter without permission. Normally, only the Unspeakables are allowed to go there as it's very dangerous. The prophecy made about you was placed there sixteen years ago, but that one is only a memory. The real prophecy is right here, in this Pensieve."

Harry eyed the silvery substance in the bowl warily and sighed. He didn't really like Pensieves. He was of the opinion that memories should stay where they belong... in the head of the person who has them. He couldn't remember how many trips into a Pensieve he had taken with Narcissa and Draco, but he was never a fan of it even if it could be damn useful. It was just strange to see people he knew that were dead walking around next to you.

"Are you ready Harry?" asked Dumbledore and Harry nodded. "Then let's go." With a swish of Dumbledore's wand the Pensieve enlarged and they both dived headfirst into the memory. Harry blinked and looked around. They were in a room of some kind; it looked like it could be the backroom of a pub. Two people were there, but he couldn't see them very well.

"We are in the Hog's Head, a pub in Hogsmeade," said Dumbledore. "I was interviewing a new Divination Professor and I'm sure you recognize the witch that applied for the position."

Harry looked at who was without a doubt, a younger Albus Dumbledore, and snorted when he recognized the woman on the chair in front of him. She was wearing very thick glasses that made her eyes the size of golf balls and had scarves draped all over herself.

"Trelawney?" asked Harry. "Why are you showing me a memory of...?" His head snapped to the older Dumbledore next to him. "No! Tell me this is a joke!"

Dumbledore shook his head. "I wish it were, but please listen carefully. I told you in your third year that I believed she had made two real prophecies before now, didn't I?"

Harry nodded and looked at the younger Dumbledore who looked like he wanted nothing more than to leave, and Trelawney who had her head bowed in shame.

"I'm sorry Sybil, but I can't see how you are qualified for this position," said the younger Dumbledore in a friendly tone. "I thank you for coming, but I will take my leave now."

Just as Dumbledore got to the door, Trelawney's body stiffened and her breathing grew ragged. Harry balled his hands into fists; he had seen her do this in his third year too.

The younger Dumbledore stopped and looked at her in concern. "What is wrong?"

Trelawney didn't answer his question, but when she opened her mouth her voice sounded deeper than usual: "The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches... born as the seventh month dies... born to those who have thrice defied him. And the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal. But he will have power the Dark Lord knows not. And either must die at the hand of the other, because neither can live while the other survives. The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches..."

Harry stared at Trelawney and sighed when the older Dumbledore gently grabbed his shoulders and pulled him out of the memory. They sat in silence once they were in his office again. Harry had his head in his hands and Dumbledore looked at him in concern.

"Damn that old dragon-fly!" Harry cursed and leaned back in his chair. "That ugly bug is one of the reasons that that shit-eating, snake-faced, old pedophile is after me!"

"Language, Harry," chided Dumbledore. "It was Sybil who made the prophecy, but you have to understand that seers can't control their visions."

Harry sighed and ruffled his hair. "I know... I read it in a book some time ago... but it still... well... it pisses me off..."

"Do you understand now why I didn't tell you the prophecy before?" asked Dumbledore gently and rose from his seat to put the Pensieve back into the cupboard.

Harry glared at his fingers but nodded. "I was too young and I can't imagine how I might have reacted if you had told me before my fourth year. But... thanks for finally telling me, sir."

"Do you understand what the prophecy means?"

A small grin slowly formed on Harry's face. "Yes... I believe I know what it means. But I don't think it's really necessary to know the meaning. It is how it is. But I don't have to fight him if I don't want to. Even if I don't want it another way."

"Very wise words and exactly what I thought you would say," nodded Dumbledore. "Tell me my boy. Is there anything else you wanted to ask me today?"

Harry stood up. "Yes, sir."

Dumbledore raised his eyebrows. "And? What is it?"

He grinned. "Why exactly is the common room of the Phoenix in the same room where you found chamber pots when you needed a toilet?"

Dumbledore stared at him. "So it's in that room? The founders sure were full of surprises."

"Indeed," smiled Harry. "I just hope the scenery has changed a little bit. It would be uncomfortable to sleep between pots."

"Well then, off you go Harry," said Dumbledore chuckling. "Good night."

"Good night Professor."



Harry threw a last glance at Fawkes who ruffled his feathers and shook his head with what Harry swore was a smile. He opened the door and stopped when he felt something brushing against his mind.

‘Use your element then you will succeed.’

He stopped in mid-step and looked back at the Phoenix who blinked at him innocently. He sighed and tilted his head slightly in his direction. With a little bit effort he could now feel the presence of the other creature ‘What should I use it for?’

Fawkes trilled exasperated. ‘Use it for what you have been trying to do for weeks. You are dense sometimes... I don’t know how you ended up as a Phoenix.’

Harry’s eyes widened and he jumped a little bit when he heard a quiet chuckle. He looked at Dumbledore who looked back with twinkling eyes.

“Did he say something interesting?” Dumbledore asked and grabbed another lemon drop.

Harry glared at Fawkes and held his nose high in the air with a slight smirk on his face. “No... not really. He is just getting on my nerves.”

Fawkes gave an offended squawk but seemed to be amused and Harry smiled as he closed the door behind him. He looked at his watch. It was ten o’clock; curfew. He shook his head. He was damn lucky that he was a Prefect, otherwise he would be in real trouble if he ran into a teacher or that blasted cat of Filch’s.

He slowly walked along the dark corridors and the familiar feeling of being home washed over him. For some reason, he didn’t really want to go to the Common Room, even if he was interested in what it looked like. He shrugged and decided to go up to the owlery and send a letter to his godfather.

He had seen Sirius’ face when it was time for him to leave for school, and Harry didn’t really like it that he had to leave him behind, especially now that he had really gotten to know him.

When he reached the owlery he smiled as a fur ball crashed down on his head, and chuckled as he plucked it out of his hair.

"Hello Pig. I haven't seen you in ages," he greeted the tiny owl who flapped his wings excitedly. A short time after that Hedwig flew down to him too and nipped him gently on the ear. "Hi, girl. How are you?"

Hedwig hooted softly and positioned herself on his shoulder. He smiled and conjured a parchment and quill to write a short letter to Sirius. Before he started to write the actual letter he took out an envelope and drew a small phoenix in the bottom right corner with a short sentence over it.

You know how it goes Snuffles.

He tapped the words with his wand and they changed from black to red for a short moment before returning back to normal. He wrote:

Dear Mr. Padfoot,

If you can read this then you haven't forgotten the Marauders' Motto! Hurray to the old dog!

Now... how are you? I hope the house is still in one piece... I surely hope so, because I want to read some more in the library.

I'm sorry to say that I am no longer able to grace the Gryffindor Tower with my dashing presence. As you already know, there was a resorting and our dear old hat (his name is Gideon by the way) decided that I shall be trying my luck in a different house this year. I think you will be able to figure out which house I'm now in by yourself. You wouldn't be a Marauder if you couldn't.

I know I already said it at the train station, but please be safe and don't let anyone anger you. I know your temper Mr. Padfoot. Please give regards to our dear friend Mr. Moony.

Mischief managed.

Mr. Shadow

He folded the letter and put it into the envelope. He murmured a quick charm and the letters on the envelope started to glow again, followed by the whole letter. After he was finished, Hedwig presented her leg and flew off after Harry gave her a soft pat on the head.

He leaned over the railing and looked down at the Black Lake. Pig meanwhile decided to annoy him to no end by hopping up and down on his head. Harry just ignored him and looked over at Hagrid's Hut. Normally by this time there was always a light on, and he frowned when he saw that it was still completely dark. Hagrid had been at the sorting, so where is he now?

"You damn owl, stop that!" snapped Harry when Pig scratched him painfully on the ear. He flicked his wand and Pig sailed over to the other side of the room, where he gave a loud chirping noise as if he had enjoyed it.

"Who is there?" he heard a familiar voice from down the stairs.

He didn't answer and looked over to the staircase where footsteps could now be heard. A short time later the familiar silhouette of Hermione appeared in the doorway. She had her wand drawn and a small light at the tip of her wand illuminated her face.

"Hi Mione," said Harry, and she whirled in his direction.

"Harry! I looked for you everywhere!" she huffed and crossed her arms.

Harry raised his eyebrows and went to stand in front of her. "Why is that? You know that I had a meeting with Dumbledore."

She nodded. "I know. But I saw him not even five minutes ago near his office and he said that you had already left."

"So why were you looking for me?" asked Harry curiously. "I could have been in the new Common Room, you know. And it's after curfew already."

Hermione rolled her eyes as she took his hand and dragged him down the stairs. "Tonight is our turn. We have patrol until eleven o'clock."

Harry chuckled. "So you already read the scroll Davies gave us?"

"Of course," she answered. "We have patrol together on Monday's and Thursday's until eleven o'clock."

Harry smiled mischievously and threw his arm over her shoulder to whisper in her ear. "Do we have to? I know a fabulous broom closet on the sixth floor..."

Even in the darkness he could see Hermione blushing and chuckled as he kissed her cheek.

"Harry... you know that's not possible," she answered softly.

He shrugged and wrapped his arms around her waist. "Okay then, let's do it in the corridor."

"Prat!" she giggled and found herself enveloped in a deep kiss when she tried to turn around.

Hermione smiled and leaned her head on his chest. "What did Dumbledore say anyway? Did he tell you the prophecy? And did he say anything about the new house you're in now?"

Harry sighed and ran a hand through his messy black hair. "Yes... he told me about the prophecy, and yes... he also said something about the new house."

Hermione gave him a concerned look. "And? Are you okay?"

He looked at her. "I think so. I'm not going to worry too much about the prophecy now. I mean... Voldemort is already after me, so I only have three options anyways."

Hermione took his hand and they walked slowly through the castle. "And what are those options if I may ask?"

He chuckled dryly, even as the situation itself wasn't funny. "The first is that I avoid a direct confrontation with him and hopefully he gets bored or dies while choking on an apple or of old age. The second is hiding. And the third... well... I'm going to either kill him or die trying."

Hermione squeezed his hand. "Don't say something like that! You won't die because of Vo-Voldemort!"

"I might not have a choice," said Harry quietly and Hermione tightened her grip on his hand and sniffed softly.

"Why?" she asked in a monotone.

He looked her in the eyes and could see that she was scared for him. He stopped walking when they were near the Transfiguration classroom and caressed her cheek with his free hand. "Hermione... the prophecy regarding old Snake-face and I said something about that. Do you want to know what it said?"

She just nodded and held his hand like a lifeline so he proceeded. "It said: 'And either must die at the hand of the other, because neither can live while the other survives.' Do you understand?"

She looked at him with a frown on her face and gasped when she grasped the meaning of what he had said. "No... please tell me, that this isn't the prophecy! Tell me that you just made this up to scare me!"

Harry sighed. "I'm afraid it is. And I would never make something like this up."

"B-but... it doesn't say who will win..." whispered Hermione and looked at him wide eyed. "It just says that either must die..."

Harry nodded and leaned forward. He wiped the tears that threatened to fall out of her eyes away and kissed her softly on the forehead. "I know Mione. But prophecies can be very vague. If I decide not to fight

him, I wouldn't fulfil that part, because I'll never face him in a battle of life or death."

"So you won't fight him?" asked Hermione quietly and looked down.

Harry shook his head slowly. "I will fight him, because I must and because I can."

Her head snapped up. "But why?! Why do you have to fight him? Why not Dumbledore or the Order?! Why you?!"

He looked directly into her eyes. "Because I have to. I have to do it for myself. I can't just sit around and wait till he is gone or everyone else is dead. He... he destroyed my life Mione. He destroyed the normal childhood that I could have had. If it weren't for him, my parents would be alive and this cursed Boy-Who-Lived sign that I'm wearing on my forehead wouldn't exist!"

His voice had grown angrier with every word and Hermione just stared at him. "I would just be a normal boy, I wouldn't be famous, and maybe I would even have siblings... the list goes on and on..."

"Oh, Harry... so it's revenge?" asked Hermione as she hugged him hesitantly. "You want to fight him because he is responsible for all of your suffering?"

He pressed his nose into her soft hair and inhaled her scent. It was a mix between vanilla and lavender. "I'm not sure... I just know that I'll go crazy if I just sit around and let others do the work. I will fight him, but not because of a stupid prophecy... I'll do it for me and the people I care about." He lifted her chin and smiled softly. "You know about my... what did you call it last year after the second task? Ah, my 'saving-people-thing' just kicks in when somebody is in danger. And that is the case with Voldemort."

Hermione chuckled softly and nodded. "Yes... I know that and... I also understand why you can't just sit back and watch."

"Thanks," said Harry and smiled down at her. He looked at his watch and grinned. "Hey... we should go back to our common rooms. It's nearly eleven."

Hermione looked up startled and grabbed his arm to look at his watch. "You're right! I didn't realize that we spent so much time talking and... DAMN!"

Harry actually jumped backwards a bit; staring at her in wide eyed disbelief as she slapped her forehead and began to use curse words that would have even put Ron to shame. He stood there and stared at her as she started pacing in front of him.

"Um... Mione?" asked Harry. She ignored him and kept cursing and he chuckled. "Hey honey! What's wrong with you, love?"

That quickly got her attention and she looked at him with a soft smile. "That was my trick you just used."

Harry shrugged. "It was the best way to get your attention." He leaned on the wall and crossed his arms. "So what's so wrong that it would make you curse like a sailor?"

She slapped her forehead again. "I made a mistake after the feast! That's what's wrong!"

He raised a single eyebrow. "And what might that mistake be?"

"I... I have no clue where the Ravenclaw common room is... because I didn't go there after the feast. I was in the library so... yeah..." she answered.

Harry stared at her. "But the common room is in a tower, isn't it? Just like Gryffindor."

She nodded. "Yes. But do you know how many towers this castle has?"

"Um... around twenty maybe?"

“Twenty-seven! So how long do you think it will take to look at every tower?”

He sighed and grabbed her hand. “I suppose it would take you until breakfast. Some brilliant Prefect you are.” He playfully wiggled his finger in front of her face. “Hermione.... first day on the job and you don’t even know where your bed is.”

She blushed. “Well...”

He smirked and led her up to the seventh floor while she was staring at her hands in embarrassment. Harry stopped in the middle of the corridor and she looked up and blinked owlishly when she saw where they were.

“Harry? Why are we standing in the middle of the corridor that leads to Gryffindor Tower?”

He looked at the tapestry where Barnabas the Barmy was sleeping while the trolls seemed to be planning how to get him to leave the painting and stop trying to teach them how to dance ballet. “I’m looking for my common room.”

Hermione stared at him oddly. “But... there is nothing here. Are you sure this is the right place?”

“Positive,” replied Harry and closed his eyes.

The image of the corridor appeared in his head again, but this time he could see himself pacing back and forth while muttering ‘Phoenix’ each time he passed the wall. He opened his eyes and frowned before mimicking the action he had just seen in his head. He could feel Hermione’s eyes on him and imagined that he must look really silly pacing and mumbling here. Suddenly he heard her gasp and looked at her. She stared at the wall that he had passed three times now. He smirked when he saw that a door had suddenly appeared there.

“Well. I said that my common room must be here somewhere.”



"What... how... why?" stuttered Hermione and looked at the door and then at Harry like he had grown a second head.

"I guess this is the entrance to the Phoenix common room," mused Harry.

Hermione stared at him. "How... how did you know what to do?"

He shrugged and traced the expensive wood of the door with his fingers. "Dunno... I kinda saw it in my head when I closed my eyes."

Hermione said nothing and Harry slowly reached forward to open the door. He noted how heavy it was when he had to use both hands to open it. When the door was fully open, he took Hermione's hand and entered. What he saw made him smile like a Cheshire cat and Hermione gasped when she saw what the room looked like.

"This is just... just wow!" exclaimed Hermione and Harry nodded and looked around.

They were in a very large room with dark cream colored walls and an ebony floor, with more than fifteen large windows on each side. Everywhere on the floor were small points of light jumping around and Harry looked up at the ceiling. Billions of crystals were planted there, some in the form of big chandeliers and others the size of raindrops.

It was a wonderful view; that was certain.

Majestic crystal Phoenix statues projected out of the walls; and beautiful paintings of landscapes, people and historic events decorated the area surrounding a large marble fireplace on the other side of the room.

Two marble and glass staircases on each side of the entrance led up to the boy's and girl's dormitories, and when Harry took a closer look at them he could see that there were small crystals embedded there as well.

He chuckled when he spotted Fred joking with Hannah, Daphne and Padma on two of the white sofas near the fireplace; while the rest of the boys were spread out on the remaining three sofas. Blaise and Terry were playing chess, Ernie was reading a book and George was doing god knows what. The two new first-years, Rose and Euan, were apparently already in bed.

He was a little bit startled when he heard Hermione's squeal of delight when she saw the white, nearly overloaded bookshelves and the desks with comfortable chairs on her right.

"Yeah," he said and gave her a kiss on the cheek after he had finished admiring the room with a wild smile... "Welcome to the Phoenix Common Room."

"Beautiful..."

So that was that. I hope you liked it!

Give me feedback!

So... a small little Review? Please?

I swear it motivates me when I know what people think about my story!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin.

## Chapter 13

Harry chuckled and held Hermione back before she could vanish behind the piles of books she was staring at, and led her to the remaining sofa that was not occupied by one of the new members of the House of Phoenix.

Everyone looked up from what they were doing and nodded to Harry more or less politely before looking questioningly at Hermione.

“What is she doing here?” asked Daphne a bit rudely and Blaise raised an eyebrow.

“Drop the Slytherin behavior,” said Harry and softly pushed Hermione down before he sat down himself. “Mione has no clue where her common room is, so I brought her here.”

Padma and Terry – the two ex-Ravenclaws - started to chuckle and the others joined in soon after. Hermione blushed a little bit, but had a grin on her face nonetheless.

“You are in Ravenclaw now aren’t you?” asked Parma kindly and Hermione nodded while Harry looked over at Blaise who seemed to be studying him.

“If you want to, I can show you to the common room now. But I don’t know the password...”

Hermione shook her head. “Thank you Padma, but I think I’ll just have to look for it myself. I don’t want you to get you into trouble because of me.”

Fred stood up and squeezed himself between Harry and Hermione. He threw one arm over her shoulder and grinned. “Our dear new Ravenclaw prefect can sleep here, can’t she? I think Harry will definitely like that!”

“Oh, be quiet!” laughed Hermione and looked at Harry who was still staring at Blaise. “Harry? Are you okay?”

He grinned. "He is right you know, I guess we have enough empty beds here that you can sleep here tonight. It's better than wandering the castle after curfew alone. It's dangerous."

"This... coming from you?" snorted George amused and Harry saw that he had caused Hannah to have a laughing fit so hard that she was a little bit too distracted to listen to him.

Harry stood up. "If you'll excuse me, I'm going to go find my new room." He playfully bowed to Hermione. "Be our guest Mione. I'm sure Padma, Daphne or Hannah will be happy to show you to an empty bed in the girl's dorm."

"Sure," nodded Padma.

"I'll see you later then," smiled Hermione and he went over to the left staircase.

He cautiously stepped on the first step and when nothing happened, he nodded. So he had guessed right and up there was the boy's dorm. He went up and saw that there were only three doors. He opened one of them and found himself in a room with three four-poster beds inside. He raised his eyebrows when he saw that there was a big balcony along the opposite wall and that this room was decorated in black, white and cream as well.

The floor was ebony like the ceiling, the walls were a dark cream color, and the curtains surrounding the beds and in front of the two large windows and the door that led to the balcony, were all white. The furniture was the same near every one of the three beds.

There was an ebony and white nightstand, a matching oversized wardrobe, a bookshelf and a small desk and chair.

He saw that two of the three beds were already claimed and happily went to the one near the window. He enlarged his trunk and opened it. He had been joking with Neville on the train, but he had bought a new trunk and it really did have seven

With a flick of his wand the doors of the cupboard opened and his clothes jumped out of his trunk and placed themselves neatly into the wardrobe. Meanwhile, he took his shoes off and placed them, along with the others, into the wardrobe himself. When he was finished he closed the first compartment and opened the second where his school stuff was.

When he took out his books he chuckled. "Zabini... just ask your question."

He heard the sound of shuffling feet and looked over his shoulder to see Blaise standing in the doorway with a curious look, but Harry could see that his body had stiffened.

He put the books on the shelf. "Well? What are you waiting for? This is your room also. You don't have to stand in the doorway."

"Potter... I want to ask you something," said Blaise and stepped inside.

"I already guessed that much," replied Harry and rolled his eyes. "Ask away. I don't want to stand around here until breakfast."

He saw that Blaise narrowed his eyes and smirked at him. The ex-Slytherin blinked and shook his head.

"You know Potter... I read some interesting stories in the Daily Prophet over the summer."

Harry closed the second compartment after all his school books were on the shelf, and turned around. He leaned on the bedpost and chuckled. "Did you now? Let me guess... one of the articles surely was: 'The Boy-Who-Lived gone nuts! Spreading lies about He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named's return! An exclusive interview with the mentally ill child that seeks attention by trying to spread panic!' Was it something like that?"

Blaise looked at him and then snickered quietly. "Yes... it was exactly like that. But I'm wondering... I want to know who's telling the truth. You know, Draco has been my best friend since our first year, even if

you don't see us together very often. I saw him hanging around with you and started to wonder. 'Why would he be talking to Potter?' And then it hit me."

"So... you want to know if I told the truth at the end of last year, and what Draco has to do with it?" asked Harry.

Blaise nodded.

"Ask him yourself," was all Harry said as he turned around again. "Don't misunderstand me," he added when Blaise opened his mouth to protest. "It's not that I don't want to tell you, it's just not my secret to reveal."

Blaise closed his mouth and nodded. "And what about You-Know-Who?"

Harry looked at him out of the corner of his eyes. "Why do you want to know?"

The ex-Slytherin was silent for a moment and Harry sighed but perked up when Blaise coughed. "I want to know if I should prepare myself... to fight."

Harry slowly turned around again and gave him a piercing stare that the other boy mirrored immediately. "For which side?"

"My side," answered Blaise. "I don't fight for Light or Dark. I fight for myself and those I wish to protect."

"So... you have someone you want to protect?" asked Harry with a small smile.

"Yes."

Harry chuckled as he approached Blaise to make eye contact so he could, unbeknownst to Blaise, use Legilimency to determine if he was really telling the truth. Satisfied, Harry nodded. "I will tell you something though; Voldemort really is back, and I really fought him in the graveyard, and yes, he killed Cedric."

Blaise nodded and started to open his mouth, but Harry interrupted him with a raised hand. "The rest is up to Draco, because it's not my place to reveal what he and I did. It's his; and his decision alone, if he wishes to tell you. I don't have to fear the consequences, but he has to."

Blaise stared at him with a thoughtful look on his face and smiled slightly. "I understand, and thank you," he said and offered his hand. "Maybe... we should try to act like housemates. We are in the Phoenix House together now."

Harry smiled and shook his hand. "Who knows, maybe we can even become friends."

"Dream on," Blaise shot back but a smirk was plastered on his face.

"I think I just might do that," replied Harry and yawned. "But first I want to chat a little bit with the others. I'm sincerely sorry for what I'm about to do, my dear housemate."

He grinned at Blaise who stared at him like he was crazy and with a swish of his wand the feet of the ex-Slytherin started to move by themselves and his clothes changed into an outfit that strongly resembled the clothes of Charlie Chaplin. He even had a cane in his hand and began to tap dance down the stairs.

"Potter! Stop it this instant!" screamed Blaise while his shoes clicked loudly on the crystal staircase.

Harry grinned and passed him before the others had the chance to see him. He sat down next to Hermione and gave her a kiss on the cheek. "Everything alright with your sleeping arrangements?"

"Yeah. I'm sleeping in a spare bed tonight," she answered and leaned her head on his shoulder.

"Hey guys-"

"... do you-"

“... hear that?” asked Fred and George together.

They all looked at each other and Harry let his wand vanish into his arm holster – but not before flicking it one last time. The room darkened and a bright spotlight lit the staircase where Blaise was dancing.

Hannah, Padma and the twins immediately started to laugh, while Ernie and Terry chuckled quietly. Daphne, on the other hand, had her jaw on the ground and was staring at Blaise with something akin to horror.

“What the hell is he doing?!” she whispered.

Harry tilted his head and frowned. “I believe... he is dancing something called a ‘tap-dance’. Or maybe he is trying to communicate with us in code... I’m not really sure.”

“Make it stop or I’m going to skin you alive, Potter!” raged Blaise, while doing a wonderful turn and jumping high into the air. “NOW! OR THE HORNTAIL FROM LAST YEAR IS GOING TO LOOK LIKE AN EARTHWORM!”

“Why?” asked Harry. “It’s not like it’s my fault that you suddenly decided to entertain us with a little dance Zabini.”

Said boy glared daggers at him and Harry smirked back when he stood in front of the sofa. With a flick of his wand that went unnoticed by the others, Blaise did a nearly perfect balancing act and Harry dropped the charms when the ex-Slytherin sat on the floor with his eyes tightly shut.

“Well... don’t we want to applaud him?” Harry asked and started clapping while the others – even Daphne – started to laugh and clap wildly.

“Potter... when I can move again... you should pray that you are not a ghost when you want to go to breakfast tomorrow morning,” Blaise



whispered and scrunched his face up into a grimace while trying to stand up.

Harry looked at his watch. "Oh, so I have one day to enjoy my life at last. It's past twelve p.m. now. Thanks for being so friendly Zabini."

"Damn those Gryffindors..." muttered Blaise and glared at him.

Harry smirked and wagged his finger in front of his face. "Really... I thought you already noticed that I'm no longer a Gryffindor... I guess I overestimated you."

"Harry," said Hermione smiling. "Don't be so cruel. Look at him, the poor boy is nearly crying."

Harry couldn't hold it any longer and burst out laughing at Blaise's disbelieving look and Hermione's smug one. He held his hand out and helped Blaise, who reluctantly took it, to his feet, before resting his elbows on the backrest of the sofa. They all stared at each other, Fred and George still occasionally snickering and Blaise grumbling from time to time.

"So..." said Ernie and looked around. "What... do you think of all this?"

"I like it," was Hannah's simple answer.

"Yeah. Me too," added Padma who was looking at the big fireplace.

Harry sighed dramatically and jumped over the backrest to sit down next to Hermione. "I practically told Dumbledore that he had gone nuts when I talked to him not too long ago..."

"You talked to him?" asked Terry interested. "What did he say?"

Harry smiled. "He told me what the House of Phoenix is all about. How it came to be, what it means, and when, how and why it disappeared."

"And?" everyone asked together.

He chuckled and leaned back while telling them what Dumbledore had told him about the Phoenix's. Each of them smiled at the end of his little story and Harry felt that they were starting to have pride in their new house.

Suddenly Fred and George gasped loudly.

"But what about—"

"... Quidditch?" they asked in 'Twin Speech' while looking mortified at the thought that they couldn't play Quidditch anymore.

"And your Head of House?" asked Hermione with a slight frown on her face.

"Who cares about the Head of House!" shouted George.

"Yeah! What about Quidditch?!" added Fred in an equally loud voice.

"Dumbledore said he will look for a suitable Head of House," answered Harry. "And as for Quidditch... he said that we should handle that ourselves."

"So we can form our own team?" asked Daphne excitedly and Harry raised his eyebrows.

"I didn't know that you were interested in Quidditch," he stated.

Blaise snorted. "Are you kidding me? She would have been on the Slytherin's team this year; she's been our reserve Chaser for the last three years!"

"Yeah, and we are the Beaters!" said Fred and George together.

"I'm a decent Chaser," mused Hannah. "So you can count me in too."

"I as well," said Terry. "Just like Greengrass with the snakes, I would have been on the Ravenclaw's team this year."

Harry chuckled. "I see that Quidditch isn't really a problem. But... who is going to be Keeper and Seeker? And we need a Captain as well."

"Blaise is a walking net," said Daphne smugly. "He catches anything that is thrown at him."

Harry looked at him and the ex-Slytherin nodded a bit hesitantly.

"Why are you asking about the Seeker anyways?" asked Ernie frowning. "This was and is your position. There was only one time when you didn't catch the snitch and that was in our third year when those Dementors were here and you fell off your broom. If the same thing had happened to Cedric then--"

He stopped and Harry knew why; for the people around him, the memories of the Triwizard Tournament were still fresh. Even if they hadn't seen Cedric die themselves, Ernie and Hannah had been in the same house and likely had known him.

"That is something I wanted to ask you too...," said Harry a little hesitantly. "Blaise already talked to me about it and I want to know what you think."

They all perked up at that and he continued. "I wanted to ask if you believe me, or the Daily Prophet and all the trash it prints."

Daphne was the first to answer after a short silence. "You seem to be a decent person in my opinion. I don't really think that you are mentally ill like they said...," she shrugged and smirked at him. "Crazy and foolish maybe, but not ill. I'd rather believe you than the press. My parents are always telling me that the Prophet is a load of rubbish."

"Thank god that some people can still think on their own and are intelligent!" praised Harry and threw his hands into the air with a smile.

"She's right," said Ernie. "Even if I don't like to think that You-Know-Who is back... C-Cedric didn't die in an accident... he wouldn't have been that stupid."

"There was no sign on his body of a mortal injury that could have caused his death, so yes... I believe you too," said Padma honestly.

Terry looked at each of them and then smiled at Harry. "I think we all believe you. So you don't have to worry about that."

"Yeah!" added Hannah smiling. "We are housemates now. We have to stick together!"

Hermione wrapped her arms around his arm and gave him a kiss on the cheek. "See? Not everyone is dumb enough to believe the Daily Prophet."

"Thank you," said Harry. "I'm glad that I don't have to be afraid that you will put me into St. Mungos mental ward."

"So... you are going to be the Seeker, aren't you?" asked Terry hopefully.

Harry chuckled. "Yes... I'm going to be the Seeker."

"YES!" screamed Fred.

"We are...", added George with a wide grin.

"... still playing..."

"QUIDDITCH!", they shouted in joy.

"So who's the Captain?" Harry wanted to know, and everybody looked at him like it was obvious. "No. I'm definitely not doing it!" he said and their faces fell. "I have enough to do as it is this year and haven't got time to brood over schedules for practice and how to hammer strategies into your heads."

Hermione frowned. "It's not really something I usually have much to do with, but why don't you do it a bit differently than the other houses?"

"How?" asked Blaise immediately and everybody stared at her.

Hermione flushed slightly pink at all the attention she was getting now. "Well... there are only eleven of you at the moment, so it shouldn't be too difficult to start a new system."

"What do you mean?" asked Daphne, now intrigued, and leaned forward.

"You have seven players that are on the field," Hermione said. "But playing on the field doesn't mean that someone is a good strategist and suited for training others. Take Padma for example. She doesn't play Quidditch, but I remember that sometime in my first year I asked her if she could explain it to me. She could tell me more than Oliver Wood ever could about the rules and the strategy used."

Fred and George stared slack-jawed at the ex-Ravenclaw, and even Harry had trouble keeping his mouth shut. To know more about Quidditch than Oliver Wood surely was a feat worthy of the 'Order of Merlin'.

"Ernie isn't any better," chuckled Hannah. "He's a walking Quidditch encyclopaedia."

"Are you suggesting what I think you are?", Terry asked interestedly. "I think I like where this is going."

Hermione smiled. "Yes. Padma and Ernie don't play Quidditch, but know a lot about it. However, we have two first years that are in bed already. First years aren't allowed to play Quidditch – even if we have the exception sitting next to me – but there's no rules stating they aren't allowed to train for next year if they're interested."

"So basically, you're suggesting that one of them be our Captain and the other one something like the Vice-Captain? Who will train the first years that want to play when they are older?"

"If our House gains more members next year we can even make a reserve team!" mused Hannah and nodded. "I like the idea."

"So we have our team," said Terry and took out a piece of parchment. "I think we should write it down and give the list to our Head of House when it is decided who that will be."

Harry nodded. "So Captain of the regular team... Padma Patil. Because she doesn't play personally... Fred and George will be the leaders on the field if something unexpected happens. Keeper is Blaise Zabini, Beaters are Fred and George Weasley, the Chasers are Hannah Abbott, you and Daphne Greengrass, and I will be Seeker."

Terry nodded and wrote everything down.

"Now... the Vice-Captain is Ernie Macmillan... and we have to ask - Rose and Euan were their names I believe - if they want to play too. The best thing would be if they want to play Beater, because next year Fred and George graduate."

They all nodded and Terry put the list on the table for everyone to see. Harry stood up. "Now that the really important things are settled, excuse me, but I'm tired and want to go to bed."

"I think we should all call it a night," said Ernie and yawned.

Harry chuckled and wrapped his arms around Hermione when she stood up. He gave her a deep kiss and Fred and George whistled.

He shushed them with a look and they hurried up the stairs to their rooms like everyone else. Hermione moaned softly when he moved down to her neck and sucked on her soft skin.

"Harry...", she said and her voice sounded muffled because she had buried her head in his chest. "What are you doing?"

He held her closer and smiled before capturing her lips again. When they separated he answered. "I decided to leave a little mark."

Her eyes widened and she tried to get a look at her neck – which was impossible without a mirror – where a nice love bite could be seen.

She sighed before smiling at him. "Well then I guess I'll just have to live with it."

"Yup," grinned Harry and gave her one last kiss before turning around. "Good night."

"Night," replied Hermione and went up the stairs to the girl's dormitory to the spare bed she would be using for the night.

Harry smiled to himself and went up the stairs to his own dorm. When he opened the door, Blaise and Terry were already in their beds and both nodded to him and closed their curtains.

Harry chuckled as he changed into his pyjamas and climbed into his own bed. He swished his wand and the soft light disappeared and only the moon shone through the big window. He shook his head and lay down when he heard Blaise muttering something and a small light shone through his curtains.

Slytherins sure are paranoid sometimes; he thought and closed his eyes.

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The next morning Harry woke up at quarter past five and stretched his legs while admiring the rising sun. Just like every morning, he slipped into his running clothes. Just because he was at Hogwarts now didn't mean that he could slack off.

He silently left the dormitory and found Hermione waiting for him – or rather, engulfed in a mountain of books. He chuckled and went over to her. She too had running clothes on; ever since Draco and Harry had started to train, they always worked out together.

He kissed her on the cheek and she looked up startled before she smiled. "Morning Harry. How are you?"

"I'm fine," he said and looked at the books she was reading. "Anything interesting there?"

She shook her head and stood up. "No... not really. Most of those books are the theory of defense against dark curses... they don't actually say how to do them."

Harry raised his eyebrows and together they left the Phoenix Common Room. "So you actually want to learn it?"

Hermione nodded and Harry turned around when he heard loud footsteps.

"Hey mate! Mornin' Hermione!" called Ron who also had his running clothes on and waved at them. Harry had started to greet him back, when he dashed past them and disappeared around the corner. "I'll meet you in the Entrance Hall! I really need to use the loo!"

Harry chuckled and Hermione shook her head with a bemused smile on her face. Both continued on their way down the stairs and went to the big doors that lead to the grounds. They didn't have to wait long to see Draco coming up the stairs from the dungeon. He looked a little bit banged up and Harry tilted his head with a small smile.

"What's wrong Draco?"

Draco yawned. "Sorry if I'm not really awake today but the snakes decided to question me until four o'clock as to why I suddenly decided to hang out with you."

Now Ron also came down the stairs. "Did I miss something?"

Harry eyed him. "Damn... did you flush the toilet and travel through the pipes to get here that fast?"

Draco snorted and Hermione wrinkled her nose. Harry turned around and opened the doors. A fresh morning breeze blew over their heads and they decided to do their workout near the lake. They stretched their limbs and then started to run around the lake.

Harry and Draco did six laps while Ron and Hermione only did three as they weren't as used to running.



After running they did crunches, sit-ups and jumping-jacks. When they were finished and all panting a little bit, Harry looked at his watch.

"The timing is perfect;" he said and conjured a glass of water for each of them. "We have a little bit over half an hour to get ready for breakfast now."

Hermione sighed happily and got a dreamy look on her face. "Enough time for a shower..."

Harry smiled mischievously. "I'm going with you."

She stared at him. "Into the shower?!"

He raised a single eyebrow and stepped closer to her. "Do you want me to? I was just talking about the Prefect's bathroom, but if you insist..."

Hermione blushed a nice shade of red that made Ron's hair pale by comparison, and started to sputter some incoherent words.

Harry chuckled and looked at Draco who was nearly falling asleep on the spot. "Today is Saturday, how about you go to bed and sleep until lunch?"

Draco looked at him. "That is actually a very good idea. Thank god that the term started on a Friday this year... I can't imagine having classes today."

"I second that," nodded Ron enthusiastically while they walked back to the castle.

"How is it with the Phoenix's and the Ravens anyway?" asked Draco when they reached the door.

Harry smiled. "It's great! The Common Room is just brilliant and I must say that I'm happy with my housemates. That reminds me... Draco I had a very interesting talk with Blaise Zabini."

Draco perked up at this and seemed to be wide awake now. "About what?"

"He asked me about you. The old story... why we are friends now and so on. And about Voldemort."

Harry could see that Draco was a little bit uncomfortable now. "And... what did you say?"

He smiled. "That he should ask you himself." Draco gave a sigh of relief at that. "But I can tell you one thing, he doesn't support Voldemort, but neither does he support the light side."

Draco nodded and then looked at Hermione. "And what about the Ravens?"

She blushed and told Ron and Draco what had happened and where she had slept last night.

Ron nearly fell over laughing and Draco had to control himself not to laugh out loud.

Harry shook his head with a bemused smile on his face and they promised Draco they'd see him after lunch. They all went up the stairs to the Prefect's bathroom and saw that it had been enlarged into two sections now. One for girls and one for boys.

After their shower, they changed into similar clothes as the day before, except with dragons on them, and went down to breakfast.

Harry had to stop himself from snickering the whole time, because Ron had a very angry looking handprint, courtesy of Hermione, on his face.

"Stop laughing Harry!" said Ron and rubbed his cheek while Hermione giggled.

Harry raised his hands in apology. "Sorry but I told you that it wouldn't be a good idea to go in there while the shower was still on."

Ron pouted when they entered the hall where some students were more or less sleeping over their breakfast. "It's not my fault that there is no curtain to prevent us from seeing into the girl's showers!"

"That's what the wall is for!" huffed Hermione and stared over at the Ravenclaw table.

Harry looked at them. "How about we sit down at one of the tables together? I don't think that many of the students are coming down for breakfast today."

Ron and Hermione nodded and they sat down at the new fifth table in the middle of the hall. Harry smiled up at the head table where Dumbledore and the other professors were already seated. He gave a curt nod to Snape and winked at Professor McGonagall, who crossed her arms and looked away.

"Harry...", said Hermione dangerously.

He chuckled. "Sorry 'Mione. I couldn't resist. It's just so easy to get McGonagall all riled up."

She chuckled, and after ten minutes it was official that only around thirty people would be eating breakfast.

"Harry?" asked Ron in a slightly panicked voice and surprisingly with no food in his mouth.

He looked up while munching at his toast. "Huh?"

"Tell me... isn't that Hedwig up there?" he asked and lowered his food.

Harry threw a quick glance at the owls that were flying above their heads and nodded when he caught sight of a snowy white owl.

He looked at Ron again. "Yes it is, why?"

Hermione now also looked up and choked on her pumpkin juice. "Um... Harry? I think I know what Ron wants to say."

Harry was now getting a little bit annoyed at their behaviour and looked up towards his owl again. He followed her with his eyes and tried to see something out of the ordinary.

When she landed in front of him, his eyes widened and he stared at the letter she had with her. It was flaming red, a very familiar flaming red. He looked at Ron who had gotten a letter like this in his second year.

“Oh... shit!” was all Harry could say and his two friends nodded.

He carefully opened the envelope.

That was that... I hope you liked it!

And remember, give me a Review so that my brain starts working again!!! :)

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 14

When Harry opened the envelope it started to smoke and a loud booming sound was heard before a very familiar voice started to shout:

“HARRY JAMES POTTER!”

Harry cringed a little bit but smiled slightly nonetheless, waved a bit nervously at the other students that were looking at him now, before the shouting started anew.

“WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU HAVE BEEN RE-SORTED?! AND WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU THINKING BY NOT TELLING ME IN WHICH HOUSE?! DON’T TELL ME THAT YOU ARE IN SLYTHERIN, PLEASE! I SWEAR I’M GOING TO DISOWN YOU IF YOU ARE! THIS IS THE END... WHAT DID I DO WRONG? WHAT DID I DO THAT YOU ARE IN SLYTHERIN NOW... WHAT DID I DO TO DESERVE THAT, OH GOD! MY LIFE IS OVER... YOU-“

Another voice that Harry recognized shut the other one up and he grinned slightly when the voice talked normally. “Shut up Padfoot! I’m sure he is not in Slytherin and even then... he is still the same. Harry, your parents would be proud no matter what house you are in.”

“DAMN MOONY, LET ME FINISH! So... um... well... what house are you in now?”

“BE QUIET NOW!” shouted the other voice firmly. “Sorry for that Harry. I couldn’t stop him sending you this howler. I hope you are alright and... I think Padfoot sends his greetings... um... yeah. Well then... bye!”

The letter burst into flames and Harry stared at Ron and Hermione who were gaping at the ashes with slightly wide eyes.

He smirked and vanished the ashes with a flick of his wand. “Did either of those two even consider the possibility that I could also have been sorted into Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff or a totally new house?”

Ron was still staring at the place where the ashes had been, and Hermione frowned.

“Isn’t it a bit dangerous for him to send a howler? I mean...,” she lowered her voice. “... what if somebody recognizes his voice?”

Harry gave an amused snort. “You know that Snuffles takes nothing seriously. He would rather dance the limbo in front of the Minister and rub it into his face that he still wasn’t able to catch him than being quiet.”

Ron blinked and stared at Harry who was finishing his toast. “Are you serious? He would really dance-”

“Honestly Ronald!” huffed Hermione and crossed her arms. “That’s not the point! What if the new teacher gets suspicious?”

“You mean that Umbitch?” Harry innocently wanted to know.

Ron broke out into laughter. “That’s a good one! I like that name.”

Hermione rolled her eyes but had to stop herself from grinning, too. “Her name is Umbridge, but yes I mean her. She seems... odd.”

“You mean like a toad?” asked Ron, and Harry sighed before Hermione started to argue with Ron. It seems like they will never change; he thought.

Harry tuned them out and looked up at the ceiling where more owls were still flying around with packages for students that had forgotten something at home. He blinked in slight surprise when another owl landed in front of him.

It was a beautiful dark brown, nearly black barn owl. The tips of her wings were white, just like her chest and she blinked at him with calculating eyes.

Hedwig, who was still sitting on the table and drinking from a goblet of milk, hooted and puffed her chest out. Harry looked at her and saw that she seemed to be glaring at the other owl.

He frowned and took the letter from the owl. It was a bit heavy and he asked himself who else would be writing to him on the first day of term. He stroked the owl's feathers and suddenly she snapped at him and rose into the air.

Harry just shrugged and looked at Ron and Hermione who were still arguing. This time, however, about why Hermione was still getting the Daily Prophet. A large damp barn owl had dropped it in front of her and she had dutifully placed a Knut inside the small pouch on the owl's leg.

He looked back at the letter resting in his hands and something in his brain told him to be careful. So Harry opened the envelope with his knife and grabbed a tissue. He held it under the envelope and turned it around and a thin metal plate fell into his now protected hands. He frowned but didn't really look at it before placing it on the table and unfolding the letter.

Ron and Hermione meanwhile had stopped arguing and were watching Harry curiously.

When Ron tried to grab the metal plate, Harry's hand shot forward to stop him. He sent his friend a warning glare and turned his eyes back to the letter.

"What is it?" asked Ron slightly miffed. "I just wanted to look at it."

"Um... Harry?" asked Hermione uncertainly when his hands started to shake slightly. "Are you... are you alright? Did something happen?"

He looked at her and she flinched slightly, just like Ron. Heck, even he himself would have flinched if he had seen his look at the moment! If a look could kill, Ron and Hermione surely wouldn't be alive right now - accidentally or not - and the envelope would long have burst into flames.

He looked back at the envelope and after a short time staring at the letter, with a glare that could rival Snape's, started to read it to them in a whisper.

My dear Harry Potter,

Are you faring well? I surely hope so, because it won't be very long until you will face your death at my hands.

I thought you needed a little reminder about what I promised you and was... thrilled to say the least, that some of my faithful servants were able to locate some... people that have been important to you.

You are curious now, aren't you? But I won't tell you who they were in this letter. What I can tell you; what I'm proud to tell you, that I – on my way to said people – killed six others. I doubt you knew them, but I hope you like my gift and take it to heart. It surely won't be my last, if you are alive that is.

If you want to know who the people were that I killed, you have only to look at the small metal plate I send you. Their names are engraved on it. Isn't that an honor?

Enjoy the little time you have left,

Tom Marvolo Riddle

Lord Voldemort

Ron and Hermione stared at the letter and simultaneously wanted to grab the small plate. Harry flicked his wand and it now hovered high over their heads.

"Don't touch it!" he snapped more rudely than he had intended to.

He abruptly stood up without another word and marched to the staff table, the small plate still hovering over his head.

"Professor Dumbledore, Professor McGonagall and Professor Snape. I need to speak with you immediately," he said and all the students that were in the hall looked over to him.



Dumbledore looked at him intently, looked at the envelope in his hands, then at the hovering metal plate and nodded when Harry's eyes flashed in annoyance at their lack of reaction.

"Can't you see that we are eating, Potter?" sneered Snape with a half-hearted glare. "We haven't time to listen to you."

Harry glared back and Snape actually flinched, which nearly went unnoticed by the others.

"Do I look like I care? I wouldn't even care if you were standing in the shower and singing a fucking opera right now!"

"Language, Mr. Potter!" chided Professor McGonagall and he sighed and mumbled a quiet apology.

Suddenly he heard a very unnatural cough and looked over to the new Defense Professor. He immediately thought he would go blind right on the spot. The bright pink clothes she wore should have been classified as weapons!

"Yes?" he asked more or less politely.

Professor Umbridge gave him a sweet smile and said in an overly high voice: "I would like to know what's going on. I'm highly interested in why you suddenly interrupted us in the middle of our breakfast Mr. Potter."

Harry just raised an eyebrow at her and looked back to the others. "I'll be waiting in front of your office then, Professor," he said and Dumbledore nodded. "I hope you can convince those two to join our discussion. It's... about 'Chicken-Club' business."

He turned around and left the Great Hall with billowing robes that would have made Snape proud if he had actually been watching the display. But he and McGonagall were too busy gaping. And Umbridge – what a surprise - was glaring at his back.

Harry didn't need to wait long for the professors to arrive, who watched in amusement as he rambled off the name of every single sweet he knew, hoping for the gargoyle to step aside.

"Um... bounty, mars, twix, milky-way, snickers, kit-kat... um... damn it! Pigshit!"

The gargoyle stepped aside and Harry blinked before looking at Dumbledore. "No offence sir, but... are you getting old? I mean..."

Dumbledore's eyes twinkled. "Why, yes of course I am. I'm nearly one hundred and twenty-six."

"You are joking, right?" asked Harry while they all took a position on the moving staircase.

He didn't wait for an answer and carefully watched the metal plate so that none of the teachers inadvertently touched it.

When they were all seated in front of Dumbledore's desk with the headmaster himself behind it, Harry lowered the small plate down and looked at each one of the Professors before slamming the letter down next to it.

They all looked at him before Dumbledore grabbed it. Satisfied, Harry noted that he carefully avoided touching the plate and turned to Snape while the Professor was reading.

"Did you know anything about this?" he asked in a dangerously low voice.

Snape blinked. "Know about what?"

"About... certain people being on Voldemort's 'most wanted' list," Harry said.

Snape furrowed his brow. "I know that he is targeting the Grangers, the Weasleys, Lupin and Black... but no one else that I know of."

Harry nodded and saw that McGonagall was now reading the letter and her eyes widened with every line. He looked at Dumbledore who stared gravely back, the twinkle in his eyes gone.

McGonagall finished reading and with shaking hands, gave the letter to Snape who narrowed his eyes. They all waited in silence until the Potions Master had finished reading and looked at Dumbledore.

"This is most troubling news," he said and sighed. "But nonetheless, I'm proud of you Harry, you were careful enough to see the danger coming from this letter."

McGonagall blinked. "What could be dangerous about the letter?"

Harry rolled his eyes. "Not the letter... the plate that was sent along with the letter."

The transfiguration teacher eyed the small plate on the desk and it seemed to suddenly dawn on her. Snape also had an understanding look on his face and gave Harry a small smirk.

"It seems that you are learning," he stated. "Draco must be a good influence for you."

Harry snorted. "You don't know the half of it... but I'm more interested in who the people are that old snake-face rambled on about. I... have a guess... but I hope I'm wrong..."

"So this thing could be a portkey?" asked McGonagall hesitantly.

Dumbledore looked at the plate and cast a complex spell on it. "Yes, I'm afraid so. The plate is indeed a portkey. It will activate when someone touches it."

Snape looked at Harry with a raised eyebrow. "Why are you still here then? You must have touched it when you took it out of the envelope."

Harry shook his head and smirked slightly. "Nope. I used a tissue."

"That was good thinking," said McGonagall, and frowned while examining the plate carefully. "But... I can't see anything written on it... was it just a ruse to get him to touch it?"

Dumbledore lifted his wand and turned the plate around with a quick spell. The other side was empty, too. "It looks like it."

Harry looked at the letter and sighed. "Professor... do you think that the whole letter is just to make me angry and capture me? Or is what he wrote the truth?"

The headmaster read the letter again and looked at Snape over his half-moon spectacles. "We should start an investigation into this. Severus, would you be so kind as to tell Kingsley and Nymphadora that they should try to gather some information?"

Snape groaned and rubbed his temples. "It's too early for that... but yes."

"They should start with Privet Drive," said Harry quietly. "I can't shake off the feeling that this has something to do with the Dursleys."

Dumbledore looked at him with a frown. "But he won't be able to cross the wards. Even assuming he were able to see it, the blood protection around your aunt's house would cause mortal injuries to him and his followers."

Harry shook his head and smiled sadly at the headmaster. "You forget that he used my blood to resurrect himself. A little bit of my blood is flowing in his veins now. I know that it affects the wards because he was able to touch me in the graveyard."

All three professors gasped, and Dumbledore's eyes widened. "My boy... I didn't even think about that... if that really is the case, then you were in very grave danger the whole time you were in their house!"

Harry nodded. "It's a good thing that I was only there for twenty-four hours. So much for being safe at my relatives..."

Dumbledore had his eyes downcast now. "I'm sorry Harry. I should have thought more about it. You could have been killed."

Harry stood up. "But I'm alive. What's done is done. I guess I will be informed if something has happened at Privet Drive?"

All the professors nodded and Snape stood up and went to the fireplace. He turned around before throwing floo powder into the flames and smirked at Harry.

"Before I leave... five points to Phoenix for being cautious and clever."

He vanished into the flames and Harry stared dumbfounded at the fireplace. Did Snape just award him points? Willingly?

"Who was that?! And where is the real Snape?!" sputtered Harry and the other two professors chuckled.

Dumbledore once again turned serious. "We will tell you if something has happened. I suggest that you go back to your friends."

He nodded and left the office after wishing them goodbye. He really hoped that he wouldn't see any of the professors again today. It would mean that nothing had happened.

When he was halfway down to the Great Hall, he met Ron and Hermione who both threw worried glances at him.

"What was that all about mate?" asked Ron.

Hermione gave him a soft hug. "Are they doing something about the letter? And what about the small metal plate? When you snapped at us not to touch it I guessed you thought it was a portkey. Am I right?"

Harry smiled and gave her a soft kiss on the cheek. "As always Mione, right in one. And the plate was indeed a portkey."

"Blimey!" said Ron and sighed in relief. "Thanks for stopping me from touching it!"

"You're welcome," replied Harry and looked at his watch. "Are you up for a little bit of research? I think the Hogwarts library will be a challenge."

Ron chuckled quietly. "If it was, Hermione wouldn't already know every book there."

Hermione threw him a mild glare, but Harry just smiled and led the way to the library. When they arrived there he took out a small piece of parchment and went straight to Madam Pince while Ron and Hermione waited for him.

When he came back he grinned at them.

"What did you do?" asked Hermione curiously.

Harry looked at Ron. "I believe you when you say Mione knows every book in this library but... what about the restricted section?"

Hermione stared at him. "You didn't!"

"Yes, I did," he chuckled and held up the small piece of parchment. "I have permission to go to the restricted section."

"Who gave you this?" asked Ron astonished.

"Dumbledore signed it two weeks ago..." he blinked innocently. "...didn't I tell you?"

"NO!" they said both at the same time which earned them an angry glare from Madam Pince.

"Well you know it now," stated Harry. "Come on then. Maybe we can find something interesting before lunch."

They nodded and Harry felt Madam Pince's piercing stare on his back as he entered the restricted section.

He smiled at Ron who had never been here before.

"I think I know now why it's restricted," the redhead said and looked around in disgust. "The books nearly scream dark magic!"

Harry grinned as he thought back to his first year when a book really had screamed when he opened it, and shook his head remembering that he had nearly had a heart-attack at the time. Of course, adding to his stress at the time, were also Filch, Quirrel and Snape.

This time around he wouldn't get into trouble for being in here.

They all vanished into different rows of the restricted section and met fifteen minutes later at a big table in the middle of the room. Each of them was carrying a big pile of books about dark magic.

Ron looked uncomfortably at the books. "I don't really like the idea... learning dark magic is bad... but... I see the reason behind it."

"So you will do it then?" asked Harry and Ron nodded a bit hesitantly.

Hermione opened the first book and looked at Harry. "What should we be looking for?"

He thought for a moment before answering. "Look for simple curses at first. We will start with those. After that we move to rituals and the like, and then... we try the Unforgivables."

Ron and Hermione both gulped but nodded nonetheless and started to work their way through the books.

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"What about this one here?" asked Ron, half an hour and four useless books later. "It actually describes how to do them."

Harry looked at the book. It had a shimmering black cover and blood red letters on it in a language he didn't understand. He read through the first couple of pages and nodded. "It's good, but a little bit too advanced to start out with."

"How do you know that?" asked Ron while Hermione took out a piece of parchment and wrote some titles on it.

He smirked. "I told you that I already started practicing them with Draco and... Narcissa. I'm at blood-rituals at the moment."

"Damn..." whistled Ron when Hermione came back with another big pile of books. "Are you planning on sleeping here tonight?"

She shrugged and gave a small smile. "If I can't find my Common Room again I just might do that."

Harry snorted and buried his head into another book while glancing occasionally at his watch, to check the time. Nothing... he took another book. Again... just theory but nothing telling you how to do it...

He sighed in exasperation and threw the book on the desk. How he wished now that he hadn't burned down France Manor... or at least taken all the books out first. Or... his eyes widened and he banged his head on the desk, which earned him surprised looks from Ron and Hermione.

"I'm obtuse, crazy, or just plain dumb!" he murmured. "Why didn't I think about it before?"

"What is it?" asked Hermione. "Do you know something that would help us learn the curses?"

He nodded when suddenly the door opened and a familiar person entered the restricted section. He didn't bother to turn around, he just sighed.

"I have the perfect person to help us," he said to them while the footsteps behind him grew louder. "If they don't have any good books, then nobody will have them."

"Who?" asked Hermione immediately.



“Harry?” said a familiar voice and Harry closed his eyes before slowly turning around to look at Dumbledore.

He regretted it immediately because he could see in the headmaster’s eyes that something had happened.

“Yes?” he asked quietly and braced himself.

Dumbledore sighed and sat down on another free chair while Hermione put her chair next to Harry’s and snuggled against his side.

“My boy... I’m afraid Voldemort’s letter wasn’t just a fake... what he wrote was indeed true.”

Hermione gasped and Ron looked ghostly pale now. Harry on the other hand just looked at the headmaster without blinking and waited for him to continue.

“Nine people lost their lives last night,” the headmaster said and shook his head sadly while looking at his hands. “Arabella Figg was one of them and...”

“My relatives?” asked Harry.

Dumbledore looked him in the eyes. “I’m sorry my boy, but the Dursleys... are dead.”

I hope you liked it.

And please, don't forget the Reviews! It's just a small click and I know what you think about my story.

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 15

Harry just sat there and stared at Dumbledore without moving a single muscle. The words echoed in his head and kept repeating themselves.

They were dead... killed by Voldemort... gone.

Just like the six other people Voldemort had written about in his letter. He felt Hermione's head against his chest and blinked. He hadn't seen her move. Just a second before she had been sitting next to him and now she was sitting on his lap, hugging him.

Death...

Harry sighed and saw Dumbledore's and Ron's concerned looks. He gave them a soft smile and rubbed his eyes. They sat in silence, because no one knew what to say. At the same time Harry felt a little guilty...

He was not more affected by his relative's death than by the death of six strangers, that he had never met before. Sure, he had known Arabella Figg, but she was more of an acquaintance than a close friend. The same went for the Dursleys, even if he had known them.

"I'm sorry Harry," said Dumbledore once more.

He looked at the headmaster and then at Hermione who looked at him with worry. "You know what?" Harry said to the three of them. "Please don't think I'm cold hearted but... the death of my relatives doesn't really affect me very much now that it has had time to sink in."

Ron tilted his head in question. "Why is that? After all... well... they were your family."

Harry nodded. "Yes, they were. But you all know that I wasn't really close to them. They treated me like a house elf and never had a single kind word for me. You must know..." he looked at Dumbledore now, "... that I didn't consider them my family in anything but blood. And that was just my aunt and to a degree my cousin."

“So you don’t feel anything about their deaths?” asked Dumbledore carefully.

Harry shook his head. “It would be a lie to say that I don’t. I feel sorry for them and regret it that they had to die because of a maniac. And I feel angry that Voldemort believes it is necessary to kill people, just like he can kill me. But... to be honest, I won’t get sleepless nights.”

“You’ve matured Harry,” responded Dumbledore with a sad smile while Hermione again took her seat next to Harry. “I can understand the reason behind your lack of mourning, but I would like to ask you one thing.”

With a sigh Harry straightened his back. He thought he knew which question was coming now.

“Harry,” said Dumbledore. “I wasn’t concerned about the Dursleys when you told us to see if they were okay, because the wards didn’t warn us. That is why I’m asking you this now: Do you know why the wards didn’t activate? Did you modify them when you were at your relatives?”

He leaned his head back and sighed while he ran a hand through his messy black hair. Harry really had been expecting the question, but how could he answer it?

“You see Professor,” he started carefully, “I don’t know very much about wards at the moment, because I haven’t really learned about them yet. The answer should be clear then. No, I didn’t modify them. Not even by accident. The only reason I can give you, is the simplest one.”

Dumbledore now looked at him curiously. “And which reason may that be? I’m afraid I don’t know what you mean my boy.”

Harry chuckled dryly. “You explained it to me some time ago. The reason is that I never – after I set foot into Hogwarts for the first time – considered Privet Drive to be my home.”

Dumbledore's eyes widened in realisation and he nodded. "I understand and... I'm sorry once again for not coming to check on you over the years."

He waved it away. "Rubbish! We already covered that and I said that I forgive you, sir."

"Thank you." The headmaster stood up. "The last thing I want to know is... if you wish attend your relative's funeral?"

Harry said nothing and raised an eyebrow at Dumbledore who elaborated.

"It will be held near Nottingham where your uncle's sister Marge Dursley lives. When Nymphadora informed her of your relative's death, she said that she would arrange everything. Will you be going?"

Now Harry shook his head. "No. I won't be attending their funeral." That earned him raised eyebrows from all three of them. "Firstly, Marge would never tolerate it, and might possibly try to kill me because I wasn't killed. Secondly, it would mean that I would be paying them my last respects, and if I'm honest... I don't feel like they deserve it."

Dumbledore nodded with a sigh. "Very well. Then I can only wish you a good day despite that sad news."

Harry nodded. "The same goes for you Professor."

Dumbledore smiled slightly and nodded to Ron and Hermione who were both staring straight ahead of them and not moving a single muscle.

After the headmaster left and his friends still didn't move, Harry started to get annoyed and stood up to put some of the useless books away.

What did they expect? That he would break out in tears and scream bloody murder because of his relative's death? Sure, after the

Triwizard Tournament he sure would have done that, but that was over a year ago – for him anyway. He was past that.

When he had taken all the books in his arms to their respective shelves, he looked down at the floor. His mind wandering away from thoughts of death and back to the suggestion about the books he had made earlier.

He would have to speak with Draco about it... it was more than a little bit dangerous to contact the people he was thinking about. Not for themselves, but for those people. Heck, it had been a great coincidence that they had even met them! He remembered their greeting with a slight chuckle.

They – meaning Draco, Narcissa and himself - had been knocked out very rudely and woken up two days later in a room that had just screamed; we are people it's wise not to mess with!

"Mate?" he heard Ron's voice. "Harry where are you? It's time for lunch... you coming?"

"Yeah!" answered Harry and strolled back to the table in the middle of the room. "Sorry, I was thinking."

"You won't start to blame yourself now, will you?" asked Hermione worriedly and opened her bag to put the books they hadn't read in. "You know that won't help."

He looked at her and then at Ron who had the same look as his girlfriend and shook his head. "I was totally honest about what I said to Dumbledore earlier. I'm sorry for their deaths... and I'm angry, but nothing more."

They nodded and left the restricted section, each with a pair of books in their arms and Hermione's bag. Madam Pince followed them with a glare that clearly said; don't touch the precious books, until they were outside out of the library.

"Can you tell me something?" asked Ron hesitantly when they were on their way to the Great Hall. "I know that your relatives didn't treat

you very nicely, but... why do you seem to hate them so much? I mean..."

Harry closed his eyes and rubbed his temples. Slowly but surely he was starting to get a headache because of this. "Let me explain something; the main reason for my lack of mourning. Listen well because I will only tell you once, and I don't want any questions about it. Is that clear?"

Ron nodded and he looked at Hermione who frowned slightly but nodded as well. He took her hand in his and she squeezed it slightly.

"Okay," said Harry. "First off: I lived in a cupboard for years. My relatives didn't think I deserved a normal room with a bed when I was smaller. They instead gave Dudley two rooms; one for all his broken toys and one for his fat ass to sleep in. I was lucky that I even got my own room after all those years."

Ron and Hermione both stared at him and he could see that they were disgusted with what his relatives had done. Hermione was repeatedly shaking her head and Ron was mumbling something about 'crazy muggles'.

He chuckled slightly when Ron nearly ran into a suit of armor that was standing in the hallway and continued. "I was a freak to them. A burden they couldn't wait to get rid of. A servant, who cooked, washed and cleaned their stuff. I had to wear old rags that were my cousin's clothes once and you know that I looked like I would drown in them. After working, I often lay in bed and tried to forget my hunger, because once again there weren't any leftovers for me to eat. Need any more reasons?"

Ron shook his head a bit shakily. "No... thanks. I pass..."

"Oh, Harry...", said Hermione quietly and squeezed his hand once more. "I had no clue that it was that bad!"

He shrugged. "It's over now, isn't it? Not in the friendliest way, but in some respects I have old snake-face to thank."

"You serious?" asked Ron with a small grin on his face.

He shook his head and grinned himself. "Nope. That's my godfather. I think you already knew that. I guess I was wrong. A pity..."

The redhead groaned and Hermione softly smacked him upside the head when they entered the hall. He pouted and that caused some of the male students that saw him to snicker. He groaned when he heard some whispers amongst the female population of the student body.

"Isn't he gorgeous?"

"Look at him... do you think he will go on a date with me?"

"God his eyes... I could get lost in them!"

"And that body!"

He really had to hold Hermione back now, because she was glaring daggers at every girl that looked in their direction and desperately seemed to be trying not to jump at them and strangle them.

"Relax Mione," he chuckled when she growled at a Hufflepuff sixth year.

"If one of them tries to flirt with you, remind me to kill them afterwards..." she mumbled and he gave her a kiss on the cheek that caused a collective sigh to go through the females.

After Ron had left to go to the Gryffindor table, and Harry continued on to escort Hermione to the Ravenclaw table, he suddenly stopped in his tracks as they passed the Slytherin table.

"How long do you think he will date the mudblood?" Pansy Parkinson asked and Harry frowned.

"Don't know," answered an older student with a sneer. "Probably when he's tired of fucking the filthy piece of trash. You really think he's in love with that mudblood whore?"

In the next instant the older student – a seventh year – found himself lifted to his feet and thrown on the floor with full force. He groaned when his arm gave a loud ‘crack’ and looked around for the culprit.

His eyes landed on Harry and it was obvious he was scared now when he saw the look in his eyes.

Harry was angry... no, scratch that, he was furious! Totally and absolutely pissed off!

He crouched down so that he was on eye level with the whimpering Slytherin who held his arm in pain and knew that all eyes in the hall were on him now. “Your name is Avery, isn’t it?”

The Slytherin just glared at him and he assumed that he was right.

Harry grabbed his throat and leaned forwards to his ear. “Listen... and listen well,” he said in an icy cold voice. “If I ever... hear you say something like that again,” his eyes drifted from the face of the other to his arm and back, “then a broken arm will be the least of your worries!”

Avery sneered up at him. “Why do you care?! Are you angry because I spoke the truth about your slut of a mudblood?”

Harry tightened his grip on the other’s throat and whispered for only him to hear: “Be careful... or you will endure something that not even your Death Eater daddy and his master are capable of!”

He raised his sleeve slightly for only Avery to see. A small silver and black dagger was strapped next to his invisible wand holster. It was a beautiful piece of work with small emeralds on the grip that was made of black leather.

“I know how to use this,” said Harry casually to Avery who was now terrified. “And it hurts more than a wand.”

He stood up and Hermione looked at him with wide eyes and gave him a big hug. “Thank you for defending me. But-“



“Mr. Potter! What is the meaning of this display?!” screeched a voice he had absolutely hated since the first time he had heard it.

He turned around and looked coldly into the face of the new Defense Professor. “I’m afraid I don’t know what you mean, ma’am.”

“Why are you attacking a fellow student?!” she screamed and he rubbed his ears with a pained moan. They were surely bleeding now...

Harry smirked while Hermione glared at the Professor. “I have no clue. This... fellow student wanted to trip me when I passed by and I decided that it wasn’t acceptable. Is there a problem with self-defense, Professor?”

Umbridge coughed and blinked at him – smile still in place. “Indeed there is. I don’t like it when people lie to me. That will be fifty points from... Phoenix.”

Harry feigned horror and clutched his chest. “Oh my god! This is the end! Everybody go and run for your life! I just have lost points!” he threw her a cold look. “Do I look like I care?”

Umbridge’s fake smile grew. “Detention Mr. Po-“

“What’s going on here?” asked a silky voice and Professor Snape came down from the staff table while the other students watched the display.

He looked from Avery, who was still lying on the floor and clutching his arm, to Harry and then at the pink toad on two feet.

Umbridge smiled wider. “Mr. Potter decided to attack a fellow student without reason and I saw fit to-“

“And you know that how?” asked Snape with a raised eyebrow and Harry chuckled quietly when the smile on Umbridge’s face vanished.

She puffed out her chest and took a stance that she probably thought was intimidating. "Because I saw it myself, Severus."

"I don't remember having offered to allow you to call me by my given name," sneered the Potions Master and Harry looked at Hermione who was looking back at him with wide eyes.

"And how were you able to see it yourself?" Snape continued. "I don't recall that you were here two minutes ago. You just arrived."

Umbridge opened her mouth but no sound came out and Harry smirked when he caught Snape's eye and mouthed a silent; Good one.

"But detention seems to be in order," said Umbridge, and the sweet fake smile was on her face again when she looked at Harry.

"Oh, I will handle Mr. Potter," replied Snape. "You should try to get used to the school before you have to spend time with this insolent brat."

After a short silence, Umbridge nodded and glared at Harry before going to the staff table.

Snape glanced at him and cleared his throat before placing the usual sneer on his face. "Outside Mr. Potter. I believe we have to speak about your punishment." He looked down at the Slytherin. "Mr. Avery, get to the hospital wing and get your arm fixed."

Harry nodded and Hermione gave him a kiss and a worried glance before joining the Ravensclaws who were eagerly awaiting their new housemate.

Snape was already at the door and Harry followed as Draco entered and gave him and Snape a questioning glance. Harry just shrugged and gave the Slytherin a wink that he responded to with a small smirk.

When he was in the Entrance Hall, Snape sighed and turned around, just at the moment Avery wobbled up the stairs to the hospital wing. Harry just shook his head.

"Potter, what do you think you were doing?" Snape demanded to know.

Harry blinked innocently. "I didn't do anything wrong and...", his eyes hardened, "I'm sure you heard what Avery said. So I don't regret it."

Snape sighed and rubbed his temples. "Yes... I heard what he said, but that is no reason to attack him in front of the whole school."

He raised his eyebrows. "So I should have done it when nobody was looking?"

"No! Damn it, Potter! Don't you understand?" said Snape exasperated. "I know that you are angry because he insulted Ms. Granger, but still... I'll tell you just this once: Be careful."

"You are giving me a warning?" asked Harry slightly disbelieving.

Snape nodded curtly. "You can call it that. Professor Umbridge is... not the best person to anger. She has the whole Ministry behind her and the consequences could be very... far-reaching if she decides to make your life harder."

"I already noticed that," replied Harry and shrugged. "But I don't really care. Fudge and his cronies are a bunch of idiots. If they decide to call me a liar and make my life a living hell then I wish them good luck with that."

Snape sighed and nodded to the hall. "Go back to lunch. Talking with you is like trying to teach a doorknob."

"Well thanks," grimaced Harry. "I guess I should take that as a compliment."

"By the way," said Snape and smirked. "Sixty points for defending a fellow student, but five points from Phoenix for disrespecting a professor."

Harry nodded unconcerned, but then gaped at the Potions Master when he went back to the Great Hall. He stood there and blinked once... twice, and then shook his head.

"What the heck is wrong with him?" he asked himself. "He awarded me ten points today and defended my actions in front of another professor." Harry looked up at the ceiling when he entered the Great Hall again. "What is the world coming to?"

He sat down at the table in the middle and was immediately patted on the back by Fred and George.

"That was cool what you did back there," smiled Padma and sighed. "I wish I had a boyfriend that would defend me like that..."

"What did Snape say?" asked Ernie curiously and looked around for the pumpkin juice.

Harry shrugged. "He just warned me about our new teacher."

Hannah goggled at him. "And nothing else? No lost points, no detention?"

"Nope," he answered and looked at the two new first years in front of him who were watching quietly. "And? What do you think about the castle? Do you like it here?"

Euan looked at him startled and nodded shyly. "Yes... it's great."

"It's just so confusing," added Rose and looked down at her plate. "There are so many corridors here... it's so big! I don't think that I will find the classrooms on Monday."

"Me too," said Euan. "I think I will get lost."

Harry frowned and then smiled at the two kids. "If you want to, I can show you around tomorrow after lunch. I have to write two tests before that, but after that I think I have time."

"You would? Really?" asked Rose and looked up hopefully.

"Sure. Why not?" shrugged Harry. "I'm a Prefect after all."

"We would like that," said Euan with a small smile after the two first years looked at each other.

Harry meanwhile, placed a sandwich and some sausages on his plate. "Then it's settled. Just remind me tomorrow after lunch."

They nodded and started to whisper excitedly amongst themselves.

"So... does anybody know yet who our Head of House will be?" asked Terry, looking at Daphne and Harry.

"Hey, just because we are Prefects doesn't mean we know everything!" said Daphne and held her hands up.

Terry shrugged and threw her a grin. "I was just curious, that's all."

"I wonder how they will arrange the classes now," said Padma. "I mean, they will have to change all the schedules that they made over the holidays, because no one knew that there would suddenly be a new house."

Harry shook his head. "No. Dumbledore told me that he already knew where some of us would end up. He asked the sorting hat before, because he had to send the Prefect badges. I guess that he changed the schedule then, too."

Now Blaise frowned. "What do you have to write tests for tomorrow, Potter?"

He smirked. "I decided to take Ancient Runes and Arithmancy. I spoke to McGonagall and dropped Divinations. That subject is just utter rubbish."

Padma nodded with a sigh. "I know what you mean. I don't understand how my sister can stand Trelawney. I made the mistake and took it too..."

Harry chuckled. "Parvati is obsessed with Divination. I'm surprised that you are not."

She threw him a mild glare. "I got enough of that subject already during the summer holidays. Parvati didn't stop talking about you dying a very painful death and Trelawney's eternal greatness!"

Harry chocked on his pumpkin juice while everyone who had Divination chuckled. Fred and George were the only ones who hadn't gotten it, but they knew the dragon-fly.

"Point taken," said Harry. "Sorry to say it, but your sister is mad."

Padma just nodded and went back to eating. Harry looked over to the staff table for a short time and saw that all the professors – excluding Umbridge who seemed to be brooding – were in a heated discussion about something.

He dropped his fork when he was finished and enlarged the bag that he carried in his jeans pocket. He took out last year's schoolbooks on Ancient Runes and Arithmancy and started reading.

He'd already decided that this would be a long year... once again they had a total jackass for a Defense Professor. How he wished now, that Remus was still here!

And the term hadn't even really started yet!

I hope you liked it!

Don't forget the Reviews!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 16

Harry sighed... that was all he was able to do at the moment. To Harry's immense relief, the first week of school was finally over and it was now Saturday. He had been successful in passing both the Ancient Runes and Arithmancy tests and had happily told Professor Trelawney that he was dropping her class. She had been nearly catatonic, and if it had been up to her, he would have already died seven times since last Tuesday.

He scrunched up his face in distaste when he thought about the reason for his current bad mood and looked around. He was sitting near the lake and waiting for his friends to arrive so that they could start their daily training routine.

Harry ruffled his hair and looked up at the sky. That damn pink toad on two legs! He thought back on his first lesson with her.

### Flashback

Harry looked over at Hermione who was sitting next to him with a slightly amused face, while some others were looking at her with disbelief. He could understand them very well. What was a Defense lesson without learning to defend yourself? Surely the Ministry couldn't be that stupid.

He looked at Umbridge and frowned. Okay... maybe they could, but that was not the point.

Everyone was currently reading their own copies of the new Defense book: 'Defensive Magical Theory' by Wilbert Slinkhart.

That is... everyone except Hermione, Ron, Draco and him. All four of them were staring at Umbridge and not even Hermione had bothered to follow the professor's instructions. She had her hand raised in the air and Harry was leaning back in his chair with a blank expression on his face every time Umbridge looked at him.

To his amusement, when he looked around he saw that the four of them weren't the only ones who weren't reading. Nearly every one of

the students was staring at Hermione slightly open mouthed, and at the moment, she was more interesting than the book. After all, when had she ever not opened a book that was in front of her?

Umbridge, of course, ignored her, until not a single person in the class was reading. Then the toad seemed to decide that she couldn't ignore the situation any longer.

"Did you want to ask something about the chapter dear?" she asked, as though she had only just noticed Hermione.

Hermione shook her head and Harry flicked his wand while she was arguing relatively politely with Umbridge.

On the blackboard, which had been filled with text about magical theory, was now a drawing that showed the evolution of toads.

Umbridge, of course, was depicted as the end result of that evolution, and just like in real life the drawing had horrible pink clothes on.

The good thing: it was permanent.

He let the picture stay as it was and turned his attention back to Umbridge, who by now was arguing with the whole class.

The big questions of course were: Do we always read? – Yes. Do we practice defensive spells? - No. What about real life and a possible attack? – There won't be any attacks!

Harry wisely kept his mouth shut and Umbridge looked at him often as if daring him to say something. He just stared back at her with the same bored expression on his face he had before.

He was silently communicating with Draco, who sat two rows behind him, using his Phoenix skills.

'Do you think she will make a good fly-trap?' he asked silently.

He heard Draco snort before he answered. 'Those poor flies... not even they deserve to be near that... thing.'



Harry had to agree with that and they amused themselves even more when Ron joined the discussion about possible futures for their new Defense Professor.

From time to time Harry tuned in to the argument the rest of the class was taking an active part in. And to say he was miffed was the understatement of the century.

Suffice it to say, not a single house escaped losing points after that lesson.

End Flashback.

Harry looked up from his musings when Hermione jogged over to him. She stopped and sat down next to him; giving him a sweet kiss.

"And?" she asked and used his side as a backrest. "Had a good night's sleep?"

He shrugged. "I had a nightmare."

She looked at him alarmed and he grinned. "I dreamed that I was a fly and Umbitch tried to eat me. I tell you... that was scarier than Voldemort ever could hope to be!"

"You prat! Don't scare me like that!" said Hermione and swatted his arm while chuckling.

"But you're right," she said with a frown a short time later. "That horrible woman has no clue what it means to be a teacher. I don't understand how they can give us someone like her for our OWL year!"

"Relax Mione," said Harry and stretched his legs. "If you think back, we've really only had one good Defense teacher, and that was Remus."

"What about Moody?" asked Ron who had just arrived, "Mornin' by the way."

Harry snorted. "I don't know about the real Moody, but the Death Eater who taught us last year wasn't that bad. He was just a little too careless in my opinion."

"Says the one who's learning dark magic in its fullest," Draco threw in as he joined their little group.

"But really..." said Hermione and bit her lip as they started their warm up. "We have to do something if Umbridge is going to be like that for the rest of the year. We'll fail our OWL's for sure!"

"So you're saying..." asked Harry, "... that you really are worried about the exams?"

Hermione looked at him like he had grown a second head once they started their run. "Of course I am! OWL's are important for our future!"

He sighed. "Mione, even Ron could pass them with flying colors now that we've started to train. No offence of course."

"None taken mate," said Ron and went back to his Quidditch conversation with Draco.

"But that's no reason to let that woman do what she wants!" huffed Hermione.

"And that would be... what?" asked Harry bored. "She doesn't do anything useful in the first place, so why should it bother us what she's doing?"

"It's our education," answered Hermione exasperated. "We're suffering because she's not able to teach us what we have to know if we want to survive when Voldemort attacks."

Harry looked at her with a frown. "Okay... I see your point. We don't have to worry about that as much as the other students though."

"True, but I'm worried about the other students," said Hermione. "I know that we are preparing for... well... for war, but the others don't have a clue."

He sighed and looked at the shimmering surface of the lake. "You know that nearly everyone thinks I'm a lunatic and that Dumbledore has grown senile. Not many people out there believe us when we tell them that Voldemort is back."

Hermione looked down at her feet when they finished their run and started to do some sit-ups.

"I know that, but... do people have to die before they see the truth?"

Draco, who seemed to grasp what they were talking about, looked at Hermione. "Even then, that idiot of a Minister will try to cover it up. Believe me; I've met him often enough and he's such a waste of air..."

"I can second that," mumbled Harry when he had finished his work out and lay flat on his back to wait for the others to finish. "Why do all the people who have a say in things always have to be so bloody stupid?"

"Merlin knows why," shrugged Draco who was leaning against a tree.

Harry raised his eyebrows. "I'd sure like to ask him if he knows."

Draco rolled with his eyes and mumbled something Harry couldn't understand. Harry closed his eyes and tried to concentrate on his Phoenix form. He was still trying to get this 'teleporting thingy' down... obviously luck wasn't on his side.

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Harry and Draco relaxed for fifteen minutes while Ron and Hermione finished their work out.

"Hey guys," said Ron who was breathing a little harder than normal. "Look who's there!"

Harry turned around and looked in the direction Ron was pointing. He shook his head and blinked. Wasn't that...?

"Isn't that Neville?" asked Hermione, sitting down and finishing his thoughts.

Draco tilted his head. "I think it's Longbottom, but... what the hell is he doing? Is he trying to learn how to dance, or what?"

Harry rolled his eyes and threw Draco a mild glare. "Of course he isn't, you dumbass!" He looked at Hermione and she nodded slightly. "Wait here. I'll be right back."

He stood up and dusted his clothes off before walking over to a tree that he could now clearly identify as the Whomping Willow. It was moving its branches around rapidly and he could see flashes of light hit it from time to time.

Harry watched Neville jump over one of the branches and then take a couple of steps back out of the Willow's reach.

He watched a little bit longer and a small smile formed on his lips. Neville kept jumping, dodging and attacking the branches, but he could see, that he was getting tired and wouldn't last much longer.

It wasn't until a branch came dangerously close to hitting Neville, who had tripped over a stone and fallen, that Harry interfered. He immediately had his wand out and shot a spell at the knot on the base of the tree rendering it immobile.

Harry approached Neville and chuckled when he saw his flabbergasted face.

"That was pretty good Neville," Harry grinned.

Neville looked up a little startled. "Wh-what? H-harry? Um... thanks I g-guess."

Harry offered Neville his hand and helped him to his feet. He looked exhausted. His face was covered in sweat and his shirt was torn at the arms, as were his jeans and he had a small cut on his right cheek that was still bleeding a little bit.

"Do you do this often?" asked Harry and nodded over to the tree. "Pick fights with trees?"

Neville looked at the ground. "I... I've done it nearly every... every day for the last week..."

"Wow," said Harry who gave him a sincere smile. "Well, it seems to be paying off! I thought you'd been working out over the holidays or something like that."

Neville shook his head and fingered his wand nervously. "No... I got t-the idea when I s-saw you and the other three working out together. I guessed... well... I guessed that it would be a good idea now... now that V-v-volde-voldemort is back."

Harry had a lot more respect for the former Gryffindor after that. He never would have thought, that Neville of all people would say Voldemort's name out loud?

"Yeah," he nodded. "It's a good idea to train for a possible war. And dueling with the Whomping Willow... that's just brilliant! You sure know how to do it up right!"

Neville blushed slightly under the praise. "Th-thanks."

Harry looked over at Hermione, Draco and Ron who were staring in his direction. He tilted his head slightly and then turned back to Neville. "Want to join us? We're finished with training for today, but we were gonna hang out at the lake a bit."

"Um... I think I'll j-just be in the w-way...", said Neville in a small voice and Harry rolled his eyes before grabbing his arm.

"Come on! You're not in the way! It'll be fun to have someone else in our group," he said while dragging the surprised Neville over to the others.

"Hey guys," Harry chirped. "Lookie, lookie what I found!"

Hermione and Ron chuckled and Draco groaned and hid his face behind his towel. "Now he's starting that again..."

Harry grinned and stepped behind his friends. "Say hello to Neville." He petted each of them on the head like dogs. "Neville, this is Ronnie, Dray and Mione."

"Hello Neville!" the three chorused and started to laugh.

"Um... hi," answered Neville shyly.

"Good boys. Good girl," chuckled Harry and sat down. "Sorry, I haven't any dog biscuits with me. You'll have to wait until lunch."

Draco scrunched his face up in distaste. "God forbid! I would never eat anything like that!"

Hermione turned to Neville. "And? How are you Neville?"

"Yeah. Are the Puffs treating you good?" Ron threw in, and grinned when Hermione gave him an annoyed glare.

Neville nodded and Harry saw him really smile for the first time. "I'm fine, a-and it's great to be in Hufflepuff. I wrote my Gran, but at first she didn't like it... then I reminded her that I'm a Prefect and she's okay with it now... I guess."

"That's great!" smiled Hermione. "How about your classes?"

Neville shrugged and looked at the ground after he sat down. "Herbology is good... I think. And Care of Magical Creatures as well, but everything e-else... well... I'm absolutely rubbish at Potions... a-and useless in Defense, Charms and Transfiguration. I won't even mention History of Magic and Divination..."

Draco snorted and Neville flinched. "Divination is hardly something you have to know. Who wants to stare at a crystal ball anyway? And it's impossible to listen to Binns' monotonous droning about the Goblin Wars. So it's nothing to be ashamed of."

"Um..." was all Neville said while looking at Draco a little unsure. "Thanks?"

Draco just grinned and enlarged his bag, which had been in his pocket, before taking out a book about potions.

"And you are not useless in anything," said Hermione softly. "Everyone can do some things, just maybe not as well as someone else."

Harry nodded. "And you aren't useless in Defense. I just saw that for myself when you fought against the Willow."

"And you're not useless in Charms either," said Ron. "You just need... practice. And Potions... well... I guess someone has to be at the bottom of the class."

"Very nice Ronald!" snapped Hermione and rolled her eyes. "That was really nice! Idiot!"

But Neville smiled. "Maybe... I finally got the Expelliarmus right in just the last two days... I'd never managed to do it before. And I w-was able to ho-hover a rock in the air for two minutes..."

Hermione beamed. "See? All you need is practice!"

Harry looked at Draco out of the corner of his eye and smirked when he saw that he wasn't really reading, but listening to their conversation. He coughed quietly and Draco glanced at him with a raised eyebrow.

"Well..." said Harry and laid his head down on Hermione's lap to use it as a pillow. "How about we help each other Nev?"

“Comfortable?” asked Hermione a little annoyed by the fact that he hadn’t asked first. He just grinned at her and looked expectantly at Neville.

“You mean... with some training?” he asked quietly and looked at them for a short time before looking at the ground again. “But you said help each other... I’m not a-able to help you with anything...”

Ron sat up straight. “Are you kidding?! I’m absolutely rubbish at Herbology!”

Harry nodded. “I’m not that good with plants either... so you can help us with Herbology; you are absolutely brilliant in that subject! Not even Hermione is as good as you are.”

Neville blushed again, but nodded. “Okay then... I’ll help you in Herbology.”

“Then it’s settled,” said Draco and snapped his book shut. “We’re five now.” He looked Neville straight in the eye. “But I’ll tell you one thing: It won’t be easy to train with us.”

Neville gulped and Harry sighed. “He’s right, you know? We train very hard and sometimes... well... we sometimes train for forty-eight hours straight. But don’t worry. It’s just hard at the beginning. You get used to exercising and with time the training will be easier.”

Hermione looked down at him. “I guess you and Draco will be doing the ‘special program’ with him then?”

Harry frowned. “No... at least not now. It’s too early for that. And... I want to find out something first before we use the pocket watch.”

“So Neville? Up for a game of chess?” asked Ron and effectively took Neville’s nervous mind off the upcoming training.

“Yeah, sure... but I’m not very good.”

Ron took a chessboard and pieces out of his bag. “No problem. I can teach you some moves.”



“Okay.”

Hermione meanwhile had decided to take out a book, and Harry frowned at her.

“Hey! Is that book more important than me?” he cried.

She looked down at him with a small mischievous smile and turned a page. “Yes... why?”

He pouted. “That’s not fair. What’s so...” he craned his neck to read the title. “... much more interesting about Care of Magical Creatures than me?”

“For one, they don’t talk as much,” answered Hermione. “And... well that was it.”

“Nice...,” mumbled Harry and got up to cup her chin with his fingers. “But can a book do this?”

He leaned forward and started to give her a kiss when a chess piece flew through the space between their eyes and Ron’s face popped up next to them.

“Sorry,” he said and looked at the broken piece. “I guess I ordered my knight a little too enthusiastically.”

“Ronald...,” growled Harry and Hermione at the same time.

“Um...,” chuckled Ron sheepishly. “I didn’t mean to interrupt your snogging session! Honestly! It really was an accident!”

“You are absolutely unbelievable,” sighed Hermione while Harry conjured a pillow and threw it into the redhead’s face. “You really know how to kill the mood...”

Ron grinned. “That’s my job! Ouch!”

“Idiot,” mumbled Draco after Ron got hit by another pillow.

Neville was still brooding over the chessboard and didn't seem to notice the commotion going on around him. Harry's eyes widened and he smirked at Ron who was currently glaring at the pillow in his lap.

"You know... I think you should concentrate a little more on the game," said Harry.

"Why?" asked Ron and looked at the board. "Neville is still thinking and I'm giving him his..."

Then Neville moved his piece and Ron's jaw hit the ground. Neville looked up and smiled at him.

"Checkmate! I win!"

"But... that... I... how?" stuttered Ron and his eyes darted from piece to piece. "Gulpin' Gargoyles... I didn't notice your castle over there..."

Neville nodded. "I wondered about that. I sometimes play w-with my Gran and she always sees right through me."

"Then your Gran must be a bloody brilliant player," smiled Harry after observing the board more closely. "And she taught you well. You're better than me by far."

Ron nodded and flicked his wand. "Care for another game?"

Neville smiled happily. "Sure!"

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Not far from where the teens were relaxing, two people were standing, unseen by everyone else and hidden in the shadows. All you could see were their smiles

"Well... they're doing well. They're already forming a unity between the houses," the first shadow said. "I'm interested to see when they will be asking for help..."

“Yes,” said the second shadow. Clearly a woman. “They are growing stronger day by day. And they have really good friends.”

“So it is,” said the first person and a pulse of magic surrounded them.

\*\*\*\*\*

Harry frowned and looked over towards the Forbidden Forest. He was sure that someone was watching them... he had felt a familiar pulse of magic just now. He squinted into the darkness of the trees and a small smile formed on his face.

He nudged Draco and nodded over to the trees. He too frowned, but then smiled when he looked back at Harry.

Who would have thought that they would see them again so soon?

So that was the newest chapter of my story.

I hope you liked it.

Don't forget the Reviews!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

Two days had passed since they had started including Neville in their training, and it had been a very good decision – they all had the same opinion there. Neville slowly but surely seemed to gain more confidence and he no longer talked to them with his face cast down – at least not when he was sure about something.

Granted, that was not very often, but still... Rome wasn't built in a day.

It was Monday now and they all were sitting at the Phoenix's table eating breakfast and chatting quietly. As always they were a little early and not many students were there. Ron had pointed out that it would be a good idea to sit there together every Monday and plan their training-schedule for the week.

Harry remembered exactly how their first real training with Neville had been... they hadn't been really friendly to him then... but they had their reasons.

Flashback

It was Saturday evening, just shortly after dinner and Harry and Draco looked at Neville, both had their eyebrows raised. They had just finished a small Duel – it had taken a minute for them to take Neville down - two times in a row.

They were standing in a small clearing in the Forbidden Forest that Harry, Ron, Hermione and Draco usually used for dueling. Ron and Hermione were currently off in another part of the forest training with the Time-Turner.

Their time for the really intense training was rather limited now because of lessons, so they only had the weekends to go all out. At first the others had wanted to stay, but Harry and Draco had insisted they train alone with Neville for the first few days.

"Was that all?" asked Harry with a cold edge in his voice. "I'm disappointed... you fought better against the tree."

Neville shuffled his feet and looked down at the ground in shame, but said nothing.

"I thought he would do better," sneered Draco when he looked at Harry. "But that was just pathetic!"

Now they could both see that Neville had his hands balled into fists and that he was shaking slightly. His face was still cast down.

Harry closed his eyes. The next words weren't easy for him to say. "If this is the level his parents fought at... then it's no wonder that they are mumbling nonsense in St. Mungos now. It's their own fault then."

Then it happened... Harry and Draco had to jump out of the way as fast as they could when a small explosion rocked the earth underneath them. Neither had time to look at the spot they had been standing on, because a powerful Stunner was sent after them. They darted in opposite directions and both raised some semi powerful shields.

Harry looked over at Draco and nodded his head in Neville's direction.

The shy boy was glaring at both of them with full force. His wand pointed at Harry for the time being.

Harry chuckled and sneered at Neville. "What's wrong? Did I insult the little boy?"

Draco snorted when Harry dodged another Stunner. "You can't insult him. Everything is the truth. His parents sure had no luck at all... a son like that... I would die of embarrassment."

"No one...," said Neville with a strong angry voice. "NO ONE INSULTS MY PARENTS!"

A strong pulse of magic was felt that nearly blasted Harry and Draco off of their feet. Harry's eyes widened. He knew that something like that would happen, but he hadn't expected this!

Neville's whole body was illuminated with a greenish-brown light. Sparks were shooting out of his wand and had Harry not been

training for the time he had, he surely would have frozen in fear when he caught Neville's eye.

"I think that's enough," Harry said calmly to Draco. "We've seen what we needed to see."

Draco nodded and his body tensed. "Yeah. Better than I thought."

With that they both dashed forward and moved their wands in a complex pattern while waiting for the right moment to strike.

They still had to dodge all kind of spells. Draco was nearly hit by a Blasting-Hex and Harry stumbled slightly when a strong Expelliarmus nearly flung the wand out of his hand.

"NOW!" shouted Harry when they stood on either side of Neville and they both unleashed a strong blast with different colors.

Neville was blown backwards, but not so hard that he could have hurt himself and his wand flew through the air.

"Damn...", whistled Harry when he caught Neville's wand with his left hand and looked around. "That was better than we were at first."

Draco just nodded and they both stepped forward to Neville, who was kneeling on the ground with his hands still clenched into fists. Once again he was looking down.

"Neville?" asked Harry softly and kneeled down in front of him. "Your wand."

Neville looked up at Harry when he took his wand and Harry he felt his heart clench slightly. But it's the best way, he thought firmly.

"Why?" asked Neville, and his voice was angry and helpless at the same time.

Draco, too, kneeled in front of Neville now. "What we did... all that we said, was to test your magical potential."

Neville looked up. "T-test me? What does that have to do with insulting my... my p-parents?!"

Harry shook his head and crawled a little bit to the side. He pointed over at the spot they had first been standing on. A crater in the form of a car was there now. Not only that, but every spot that had been hit with a curse by Neville was decorated with a small hole.

Neville's eyes widened. "Wh-what? I did... that?"

Harry nodded and decided to explain. "Draco and I were confronted with the same thing. The one who taught us to duel properly explained the concept of magical powers to us. And he too... tested us. He made us angry... so angry that we couldn't think clearly anymore. We lashed out at him, just like you did a few moments ago."

"Um...?" was all Neville said and the anger seemed to have vanished and was replaced by confusion. "I don't get it."

Harry chuckled. "Your magical powers are at their maximum when they are brought forth by strong feelings. The easiest to bring forth is anger of course. And I'm sorry that I said those things. But bringing forth a strong feeling was what we did. And as you can see... it was well worth it. Your potential is amazing!"

Neville looked back and forth between them. "So... you didn't mean what y-you said? It was all just... to test me?"

Draco smirked. "Exactly. And I'm sorry for what I said, too."

On Harry's face a grin was forming. "I can tell you; once you learn to call your magic without having to rely on a strong feeling, you will be one of the best!"

Neville stared at them and a small smile was forming on his face. "Thank you."

Draco's smirk widened and he stood up. "Well then. Round two of our dueling."

Neville's smile abruptly turned into a grimace of horror and Harry burst out laughing at his misfortune. Draco could really be a slave driver...

End Flashback

That incident had given Neville more confidence, because now he knew that he had the potential to be a great wizard, and that definitely drove him to do his best. Still, they had only trained with him for a little more than six hours. Three on Saturday and three on Sunday. And of course their daily morning work-out.

Harry had to hide his annoyance when he saw all the students who came into the hall looking at them with curious glances and whispering amongst themselves about why Neville was with them.

"I don't know what their problem is," said Hermione when the owl with the Daily Prophet arrived. "You would think they'd realize by now that something is up..."

"How come?" asked Harry and took a sip of his coffee. "Did something happen?"

Hermione showed him a small article at the bottom of the front page. "A small wizarding village was attacked by werewolves... two children and one older man was bitten."

"Damn...", sighed Harry. "Is there anything about what will happen to them?"

Hermione's eyes darted over the article and she nodded. "They will be placed under the care of the Ministry."

Draco shook his head. "They're probably going to put them into small cells with just enough food and water to live."

"You think so?" asked Neville with wide eyes. "But... that's barbaric!"

"That's the Ministry for you," grumbled Ron and took another pancake. "Dad always said they're sometimes no better than You-Know-Who."



"Oh would you call him by his name?!" snapped Hermione. "It's just getting on my nerves now!"

"Heck... even Neville says his name out loud," said Draco and grinned. "Or are you scared, weasel?"

"Shut up, ferret," mumbled Ron when he finished chewing. "But really. Look at Remus. He's not bad and everyone treats him like he is one of V-voldemort's most loyal followers."

"Do you mean Professor Lupin?" asked Neville to be sure.

Ron just nodded and took another bite of his pancake.

"I just pity those who're too dumb to see that those who were bitten by a werewolf are just normal people as well. Most of them just turned dark because the others made them by casting them out," said Harry and stared at his now nearly empty cup of coffee.

"Exactly," said Hermione and rolled the paper up when the rest of the students came into the hall. "It's the same problem with house elves. They're-

"Please, Hermione...", sighed Draco who immediately had disliked her talking about more rights for house elves. "It's too early for S.P.E.W... drop it!"

Hermione opened her mouth to retort, but Fred and George interrupted her when they sat down next to Neville.

"Good morning!" chirped George.

"How are you all this wonderful day?" added Fred and loaded his plate with everything that was in reach.

"Good," mumbled Harry and looked at his cup like he considered drowning himself in it.

“What’s wrong with you?” asked Neville concerned. “Aren’t you f-feeling well?”

Harry blinked and shook his head with a sigh. “I’m okay. I was just thinking about another lesson with the toad.”

They all groaned and finally every student was in the Great Hall. Harry looked at his housemates and greeted each of them with a small nod.

Harry nudged Draco’s side. “Did you talk to Zabini? He didn’t ask me about our friendship again.”

Draco nodded and lowered his voice. “I told him the basic outline and he understands my reasoning. And I believe... that he could be a really great help when we need it.”

“I didn’t even know that you two were friends,” said Harry and chuckled when Ernie got hit by a small package an owl just delivered for him.

“Well,” smirked Draco. “Not everyone is as obvious with their alliances as the Gryffindors.”

Harry groaned. “Don’t start that stupid talk about house traits again. Please?”

Draco just shrugged and looked over to the staff table. Harry followed his look and raised his eyebrows in surprise when he saw that two more chairs had been added, but Hagrid’s chair was still empty.

“I don’t suppose any of you knows where Hagrid is?” asked Hermione who was also looking at the teachers now.

“Or what the two extra chairs are for?” added Ron.

Harry shrugged. “Hagrid was here for the feast. And I think we are about to find out what the chairs are for.”

As if on cue, Dumbledore stood up and raised his hands. "Attention, please!"

The chatter of the students died down and Dumbledore smiled at all of them before he continued. "I have some announcements to make." He gestured over to their table in the middle of the hall. "I'm sure you all noticed by now, that we have a new house."

"No, really?" whispered Harry sarcastically. "I didn't notice."

Dumbledore looked at him, as if he had heard what he had said and then looked back at everyone else. "So we have to take care of some issues. The first is the Quidditch-Cup. The new house has already formed a team and from this year on, five houses will take part in the inter-house Quiddich competition. We've rearranged the schedule to accommodate the extra games, and the dates have been posted on the notice board in every Common Room."

"Damn!" cursed Angelina Johnson from the Gryffindor table and glared over at them. "We lost our Beaters and our Seeker!"

"Sorry!" chirped George.

"We didn't mean to!" chuckled George.

"Really! That wasn't planned!" added Harry and waved at her.

Dumbledore coughed and they turned their attention back to him. "As you can see, we have two empty chairs at the staff table and for those who are wondering: Those are for the new Head's of the House of Phoenix. It took some time to find someone, but we will host two people sent by the Australian Ministry. They will arrive here by lunchtime."

Daphne tilted her head as Dumbledore started to sit down. "Headmaster? I have a question."

Dumbledore smiled. "Yes, Miss Greengrass?"

“Why do we need two people? And why have they been sent by the Australian Ministry?”

“A very good question. Forgive me; I neglected to mention that only one of them will be your Head of House. His name is Nick Edison and his wife will be accompanying him,” explained Dumbledore. “They were sent from Australia, because no one here had the time to take this post. And they are both old friends of mine.”

Now it was Harry’s turn to ask something. “What will they be teaching?”

“They won’t teach any specific subject, but they will both assist Professor Snape and Professor Sprout with Potions and Herbology if needed.”

He nodded, and with that Dumbledore sat down again.

Suddenly a small grey owl landed in front of Harry and he narrowed his eyes. He took out his wand when he saw a letter attached to its leg and it unfolded itself.

The Chicken Club (I really like this name) will wait behind the gargoyle before the lesson with the tabby cat starts.

P.S. Those Milky Way’s are really good!

After Harry had finished the note he blinked and looked over towards Dumbledore, who was happily munching on a pancake. He shook his head with a small smile and finished his breakfast. To call McGonagall a tabby cat... okay... it fit because of her animagus transformation. He looked at his watch and saw that he had still half an hour left before classes.

Harry looked at Draco with his eyes half closed and a small frown on his face and the other immediately caught the meaning behind his look and stood up.

“I forgot something in the Common Room,” announced Draco. “I’ll see you in class.”

They nodded and Harry stood up. "Wait! I wanted to borrow a book from you. Care for company?"

Draco shrugged and Harry gave Hermione a kiss on the cheek and left the Great Hall with Draco. When they rounded the corner to the staircases, Draco broke the silence between them and turned around.

"So what's this all about?" he asked as Harry started to climb up the stairs.

"Something about the Order, in Dumbledore's office," answered Harry shortly.

Draco caught up to him and frowned. "But why didn't he tell the others? And why didn't you for that matter?"

When they reached the corridor to Dumbledore's office, Harry chuckled. "Well... I believe it has something to do with my new Head of House and his wife. But I'm not entirely sure."

"Why did you tell me then?" Draco wanted to know when they stood in front of the gargoyles.

Harry said the password and the staircase started to move. Shortly before he opened the door to the office he turned to Draco. "Because... I believe that we both may know the new Professors."

Draco's eyes widened when Harry turned the handle. "You can't mean that--"

"Yes," was all Harry said when they entered the room.

He looked around and saw two people standing in front of the fireplace. One was a middle-aged man with very dark blond hair that had some grey streaks in it, and hazel eyes that held more wisdom than seemed possible. He wore an expensive dark blue cloak and clothes of the same fine quality.

The second person was a middle-aged woman. She had black hair and friendly blue eyes that held the same wisdom that the man's held. The woman too wore expensive clothes and a lavender-colored cloak.

They both looked over at them and smiled slightly.

But they were not the only ones in the room. Many people that were here were people that neither Harry, nor Draco had seen before. After a quick head count, and a look at their clothing, Harry knew that there were a total of six Australian Ministry wizards in the room and two from their own Ministry. He sneered. Of course their Ministry had to be represented by Fudge himself.

"Mr. Potter?" asked Fudge venomously while fingering his bowler. "What are you doing here?"

Harry calmly walked over to the Minister and bowed with a small smile. "Minister Fudge. I'm sincerely sorry for the interruption, but..." his eyes flickered over to the two people in front of the fireplace. "...but Headmaster Dumbledore told me the new Head of the House of Phoenix requested to speak to me."

"And why," sneered Fudge. "would he want to do that?"

Harry tilted his head. "I believe the reason may be that I'm a Prefect in that House."

"Oh," was all Fudge answered.

Draco, who had a small - obvious for those who knew him - fake smile on his face, stepped forward. "Good morning Minister Fudge. It's a pleasure to meet you. How are you?"

Harry had to hide a grimace when Fudge smiled sweetly. "Ah, young Mr. Malfoy. Thank you, thank you, I'm well. And you?"

Draco shook his head. "It's 'Black' now Minister. My mother and father decided that they were no longer able to maintain their pretence of a marriage, and my mother chose to take back her

maiden name, as have I,” he narrowed his eyes. “And I’m well. Thank you.”

Fudge laughed nervously. “Of course. I forgot about that. May I... may I know why you are here Mr... Black?”

Draco smiled once again, but said nothing and Harry had to hide a smirk behind his hand.

“Minister?” said Harry and Fudge sighed in annoyance. “I may be able to answer that question. I brought Draco with me, because he is far more experienced in the role of a leader than I am. I’d hoped for some advice about my Prefect position from him.”

Fudge’s eyebrows shot up and he looked from Harry to Draco. “Is that so?”

Draco nodded, his smile never leaving his face. “Harry and I have formed a steady friendship over the summer. We no longer saw fit to hold onto our childish grudge against each other.”

Fudge seemed baffled. “Um... well... that is good then, I believe.” He looked first at Harry and then at Draco and leaned forward. “Mr. Black... do you think it’s wise to associate with Mr. Potter?”

Harry narrowed his eyes and turned his back on the Minister, only to see that everyone in the room was following their conversation with interest and was now staring at him. He sighed and turned back to Fudge just as Draco answered.

“Yes. I believe it is,” Harry could hear the amusement in Draco’s voice and smiled slightly when Draco continued. “Contrary to what you want the public to believe, sir... Harry did nothing to start the rumours of You-Know-Who’s return.”

“He didn’t?” asked Fudge and his eyebrows disappeared behind his hairline.

Harry shook his head and decided to say something as well. He gave the Minister a pointed look. “No, I didn’t. I may have said something

about him when I was in the hospital wing last year and you came to give me the prize money, but... I was exhausted and nearly drained of all magic. I saw how Cedric Diggory died and... admit that I was in shock after those events."

Fudge stared at him with a face that resembled a goldfish. "So you say... you say... that your claim about him... that You-Know-Who is back... is wrong?"

Harry sighed when the door opened again and Dumbledore, followed by McGonagall and Snape, entered the office. They were all but ignored by everyone and Harry saw that they now curiously stared at the Minister, Draco and him.

With a small smile Harry answered. "I don't know. I thought it was rubbish when I first read in the 'Daily Prophet' that I claimed to have seen him. I can't even remember how Cedric really died. I just know that I grabbed his arm after a duel of some sort and was suddenly back on the Quidditch Pitch. After all, it could just have been an accident..."

"Mr. Potter! Does this mean you do not believe You-Know-Who is back?!" asked Fudge with a gleam in his eyes and a big smile on his face.

"Minister Fudge," said Harry calmly when Draco coughed to hide his laughter. "I never even considered the possibility of him returning, and take you at your word, sir, when you say that he isn't back. But still..."

"I knew that you were not stupid boy," said Fudge once again in the warm tone he had used when Harry had first met him in the Leaky Cauldron after he had blown up Marge.

"I guess that was a compliment," mumbled Harry to himself and said for Fudge to hear: "But Minister... I still grew suspicious about something over the summer."



"Yes? What is it Harry? May I call you Harry?" asked Fudge and Harry nodded before he looked over to the three professors that were still standing near the door.

McGonagall seemed confused, while Snape looked seriously annoyed by the fact that he was being ignored, but impressed at the same time. Dumbledore merely had a wild twinkle in his eyes and popped a lemon drop out of nowhere into his mouth.

"Well...", said Harry and pretended to be unsure about something. "I read the Daily Prophet over the holidays, even though I wasn't really flattered by all the comments about me being mentally ill...", Fudge blushed at this point and Harry tried to look worried. "... well... there were some random articles that made me believe something was up, sir."

Fudge frowned. "And what may those be?"

Draco decided to give his own opinion at this point, and before Harry could answer he had already opened his mouth. "Minister, there were attacks on wizarding villages where a lot of muggleborns live. Mostly by werewolves and unknown attackers. And all of those attacks were in the last two months. That has never happened before."

Fudge paled and looked at both of them. "So... s-something may be up... the werewolves were...", He coughed and straightened himself. "I will look into it. But now I'm afraid I must be going. We were just here to accompany the Australian Ministry employees."

"Minister," said Draco with a very worried tone of voice. "Please think about what we've said. Even Harry's relatives were killed last week... so there must be something going on."

Fudge stiffened and looked at Harry who had his face cast downwards. "They... they were?"

Harry nodded, his face still down. "I got a letter from my uncle's sister Marge. She told me about their deaths..."

"I'm v-very sorry about your loss, Harry," said Fudge, who now was deadly pale. "I didn't k-know about that. I'm sorry."

"Thank you," said Harry quietly and smiled slightly when he looked up again. "I hope we will have the opportunity to talk more often Minister Fudge. And... I look forward to reading the 'Daily Prophet' once again without insults to my intelligence."

Fudge blushed again. "Um... yes. Yes, Harry. I look forward to meeting you again. And you as well Mr. Black."

With that, one after another, all the members of the different Ministries disappeared into the flames, after the man and the woman got out of the way.

When everyone except the two unknown people and the professors had left, Harry and Draco could no longer contain themselves. They started laughing until tears were running down their cheeks.

"I knew that he was stupid... but that was just brilliant!" laughed Draco.

"Yeah," chuckled Harry after he had caught some of his breath. "That was just so damn funny!"

"Mr. Potter, Mr. Black," interrupted Snape's silky voice and they stopped laughing, albeit slowly, as they tried to stop chuckling. "I must say... I'm impressed with your acting skills."

Harry smirked. "Thank you, sir. We do our best."

Dumbledore smiled and went over to his desk. He sat down on his chair and conjured one for each of them while the as yet unIntroduced man and woman joined them. They too, were chuckling a bit, along with Harry and Draco.

"Severus is right, Harry," said Dumbledore. "You not only made Fudge believe that you had never claimed Voldemort was back; but by pretending to trust him and be on his side – the side of the Ministry – you planted some suspicions about Voldemort's possible return into

his mind. The way he acted, he is seriously thinking about his return now."

McGonagall looked at them. "You planned all of this, didn't you?"

Draco shook his head. "Nope. We took advantage of an opportunity and made it up on the spot."

"Impressive," mumbled Snape.

Dumbledore clapped his hands. "So... now I believe it's time to introduce you to your new Head of House Harry. This is-

"Nick and Penny," interrupted Harry with a smile. "I didn't expect to see you two so soon."

The man chuckled. "So you knew it from the beginning. You haven't changed Harry. Neither have you Draco. Your show with the Minister was very entertaining."

"Thanks Nick," smiled Draco. "How are you?"

"I'm fine," he looked at his wife.

"I feel wonderful." The woman Harry had called Penny stood up and hugged Draco and then Harry. "I missed you two. Without you the house was so quiet. How is Narcissa? I heard that she finally got rid of that disgusting name of Malfoy. And Fleur? Did she get a job?"

Draco nodded. "Mother is well. She's staying with my cousin Sirius at the Headquarters of the Order. Fleur is working at Gringotts now, so you probably will have to wait a little while if you want to see her."

Harry looked at both of them after Penny had sat down again. "So I don't have to write a letter to you after all."

The man called Nick raised his eyebrows. "You wanted to write?"

Harry nodded. "I wanted to ask for some help and see if you could send us some books with useful information in them."

He chuckled. "And there I was wondering when you would ask for help."

Penny smiled. "You two... Draco, Harry. You really are doing well. We saw that you've already formed a strong unity between the five houses."

Draco smirked. "So it was you after all."

"What do you mean?" asked Nick with an innocent smile.

Harry snorted. "We both felt the pulse of magic when we were at the lake on Saturday. Did you really think we wouldn't notice it?"

"No," said Nick bluntly. "We thought you were too caught up watching the chess game between your friends."

Penny smiled and looked at her husband. "Oh, yes, when their red-headed friend interrupted Harry and his girlfriend kissing with that flying chess piece; that was just laughable. I haven't had so much fun since Albus argued with you over the uses of dragon's blood when you first discovered them."

McGonagall stared at the woman in disbelief. "That was over fifty years ago! You two can't possibly be that old!"

Dumbledore held his hands up. "My dear Minerva, looks can be deceiving. Let me introduce you to my old friends. Or Harry? Do you want to clear up the confusion?"

Harry looked at Snape and McGonagall and saw that they were both at a loss for words. Penny and Nick both nodded and he smirked.

"Gladly. Professors, this is Nicolas and Perenelle Flamel."

So that was the 17th Chapter!

I hope you enjoyed it and give me a Review!!!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 18

Harry grinned and looked at Draco, who was having problems hiding his smirk. McGonagall and Snape were looking at him like he had grown a second head. Okay, they had their reasons, but that was beside the point now. Never – in his whole life – had Harry seen the Potions Master and the Transfiguration Mistress speechless. It sure was entertaining.

Slowly Snape's head turned to Perenelle and Nicolas and Harry had the feeling that the Potions Master's brain had yet to register what he had just said.

Snape blinked.

"You are... Nicolas... and Perenelle-," Snape said in a low whisper, his eyes wide.

"-Flamel. Yes, we are," answered Nicolas and he too had to work to stifle his laughter. "It's a pleasure to finally meet you Severus Snape. And you as well Minerva McGonagall."

Snape's mouth opened, but no sound came out. McGonagall was a little better and composed herself quickly after the obvious shock of meeting two supposed dead people.

She nodded and shook hands with both of them. "It's an honor to meet you." She threw Dumbledore a pointed look. "I'm surprised that Albus didn't tell us... well... that you would be here..."

Draco snickered and McGonagall gave him an exasperated look.

"Basically, she wants to know why you are still alive after the fiasco with the Philosopher's Stone," he stated and McGonagall gave him a small glare.

When Nicolas started to explain why they were still alive, Harry decided to test if Snape was still in the world of the living.

He slowly inched towards him and looked into his face. The Potions Master was staring into space with an expression as if he had just seen a ghost...

Harry carefully waved his hands in front of Snape's face to see his reaction.

Nothing.

Harry coughed quietly and saw that not only Draco, but Dumbledore and Perenelle, were watching him as well. He grinned sheepishly and stood up straight before returning his attention back to the conversation.

"So you're saying... that the stone that was hidden in the school four years ago was not the only one?" asked McGonagall and both Flamels nodded. "It makes sense... but I never would have thought... you are looking so..."

"She wants to know why you don't look like your teeth will fall out at any moment," quipped Draco and Harry snorted.

"MR. BLACK! I can talk for myself. Thank you!" said McGonagall sternly. "Five points from Slytherin for your cheek!"

"That's Snape's part," murmured Harry and Draco nodded slightly put out. "Your godfather... do you think he will snap out of it sometime in the future?"

Draco frowned. "Considering that he just found out that Nick is here... no," he said matter of factly.

Harry nodded and looked over to the window. A small stray beam of sunlight was falling onto Dumbledore's desk and Fawkes' empty perch.

"We still have seven stones left," said Perenelle and smoothed her robes. "And as Draco so kindly put it, we don't look like our teeth will fall out because it's an effect of the 'Elixir of Life'. We look just a little older than we did when we decided to drink it for the first time."

"So you don't age at all?" asked McGonagall astonished.

"Oh, we age," said Nick and shrugged. "If we didn't take the Elixir for ten months we would look like we should already be in our graves."

"Fascinating," mumbled McGonagall when Fawkes suddenly flashed into the room and positioned himself on his perch.

Harry's eyes widened when he saw the sunlight that illuminated the beautiful Phoenix in front of him. Small flames were dancing on the birds feathers that slowly died down while he looked at them. He immediately thought back to all the times when he had seen Draco using the teleportation technique. Small sparks were always jumping around on his feathers. Then his brain got what that meant...

"YES! I've got it!" he shouted and immediately regretted it.

Snape had jumped, startled by his scream, and Harry now found himself in front of the window with a very painful bump on his head and an aching left shoulder, where a Blasting Hex had hit him.

"Severus, Severus," chided Dumbledore and Harry groaned at his tone of voice. "Don't be so hard on the boy. He is merely excited about something."

"Um... what?" asked Snape and looked at Harry who glared at him. "Mr. Potter? What are you doing on the floor?"

Harry pouted. "You just decided to throw me across the room, sir." He stood up and rubbed his slightly bleeding shoulder. "I tried to get your attention before, but you were somewhere in lala-land, sir. And then, when I get a little bit excited about something... you just throw me across the room!"

"I'm sincerely sorry Mr. Potter," said Snape, who did not sound sorry at all while the corners of his mouth quirked a little bit. "I was a bit distracted."



"Yeah...", mumbled Harry and looked at his slightly torn school-cloak. "I got that..."

Draco rolled his eyes. "You didn't hear a word of what Nick and Penny just explained, did you Uncle Sev?"

Snape glared at him and put his wand away. "Don't call me that." He turned to Nick and Penny. "I'm sincerely sorry Mr. and Mrs. Flamel. I was pleasantly surprised to see you two here. I was told that you died when the Philosopher's Stone had been destroyed four years ago."

"That was our intent," said Perenelle and smiled. "It's a real honor to finally meet you. Albus has told my husband and me a lot about you."

Snape looked over at Dumbledore who was staring out of the window as if he didn't even know they were there, before turning to the Flamels again. "What did the Headmaster tell you, if I may ask?"

Nicolas smiled and showed him a small empty vial that he took out of his robes. "Potions. Albus always said that you were a fabulous Potions Master. And... I'm interested in how you got the idea for the Wolfsbane Potion. Maybe we can chat about the subject sometime in the future?"

"Certainly," nodded Snape and Harry could nearly feel the professor's excitement.

He frowned and turned to the two Flamels. "Does this mean you will be staying here?"

Nicolas nodded. "Yup. I'm your new Head of House after all. And someone has to save your lazy bum when you once again decide to nearly kill yourself."

Harry pouted. "That was an accident... Draco was there. He saw that your damned kneazle tried to snatch my wand away from me."

"I didn't see anything back then," chirped Draco and Snape raised his eyebrows at his godson's behaviour.

"Traitor," mumbled Harry slightly annoyed.

Dumbledore chuckled and they all turned their attention to him when he began to talk. "Well. Harry, Draco, I believe it's best if you return to your classmates. The first lesson is nearly over and I believe you have Defense next?"

They nodded and Harry eyed the Headmaster. "Just like that? We just came up here for a little chat? And now we're being dismissed?"

Dumbledore's eyes once again twinkled in full force. "Yes, just like that. I merely wanted you, Harry, to know who your Head of House will be. And when Nicolas told me about your adventures with him and Perenelle, I knew that you would want to see him."

"As if we wouldn't have found out ourselves..." mumbled Draco and then a smirk formed on his lips. "You planned it, sir, didn't you?"

"Pardon?" asked Dumbledore with a smile.

Draco waved his arms around him. "That we talk to Fudge. We basically told him that Harry has the utmost confidence in the Ministry and would never do anything against them."

Dumbledore sighed playfully and Harry grinned. "Ah... you saw right through me. But you are right, Draco. I'd hoped that you would accompany Harry and speak to the Minister. I didn't quite know if you would try to ease the tension, but I hoped for it."

Nicolas shook his head with an amused smile. "That is just so typical you... always a trick up your sleeve."

Dumbledore chuckled and Harry and Draco took that as their sign to leave.

\*\*\*\*\*

Fifteen minutes later they arrived at Umbridge's classroom five minutes late and stood in front of the door with identical sneers on their faces.

"D'you reckon she'll have a fit?" asked Harry.

"Surely," answered Draco when he turned the handle. "But mostly directed at you."

"Damn..." mumbled Harry when they entered the classroom. "Couldn't Dumbledore have written a note?"

All eyes turned to them as they casually stood in the doorway and Umbridge's watery eyes widened with something akin to glee.

"Mr... Black, Mr. Potter?" she asked in her high-pitched voice. "Why are you late for class?"

"Sorry," shrugged Draco. "I had to help a first year find the Charms classroom."

"Very well," nodded Umbridge. "Please sit down Mr. Black. And don't let it happen again, or I'll be forced to give you detention."

Harry wanted to follow Draco's example, but Umbridge coughed and he rolled his eyes before looking at her with a raised eyebrow. She didn't say anything, but was merely staring at him as if daring him to say something.

He sat down next to Hermione. "Did I miss anything?" he asked quietly and she immediately shook her head.

"No... just reading that horrible book again," she answered and Harry saw that she had opened her book, but was still on the first page of the assigned chapter. A sign that she hadn't even bothered to start reading.

She threw him a questioning glance and he immediately knew what she wanted to know.

"I'll tell you when we've got the time. Tomorrow, while training," he whispered back when Umbridge started to move in his direction and

stopped in front of his desk, casting a shadow on his book. He tried to ignore her, but her simpering cough nearly drove him crazy.

“Yes?” he asked in a bored voice as he glanced around the classroom. He knew that not a single student at the moment was reading the book. He caught Neville’s eye from his seat next to Susan Bones and grinned slightly.

“Ten points from Phoenix for ignoring me. What is your excuse Mr. Potter?” asked Umbridge.

He looked at her. “For what? I’m afraid I don’t follow you Professor.”

“For being late to my class,” she snapped loudly.

“Oh that!” he exclaimed and scratched the back of his head while sporting a big grin. “Sorry. I got lost on the road of life. I had a small chat with a bat, a tabby cat and some other guys in-”

“Enough!” screeched Umbridge and a vein bulged on her forehead, much like Uncle Vernon’s. “That will cost you ten points! I demand respect from my students! You are included in that as well!

He raised his eyebrows. “Really now? I didn’t know that.” He casually stretched his arms and chuckled before looking sweetly at her. “Where did my bonus for being the Boy-Who-Lived go?”

Umbridge turned her back to him and looked over her shoulder. “Detention, Mr. Potter,” she said softly and started to go back to her desk. “Today after dinner in my office.”

“And for what, Professor Umbitch?” he asked in a friendly tone and nearly the whole class choked on their suppressed laughter.

“SILENCE!” bellowed Umbridge with a red face and turned around once again. She glared at Harry. “I will teach you to respect your elders! You can’t just...”

He tuned her rant out and mentally berated himself for saying that out loud.

'Good job,' Draco's voice said in his head. 'This sure is giving you a sympathy bonus.'

'Shut up,' Harry shot back and threw a quill over his shoulder in the hopes of poking him in the eye with it.

"You really shouldn't have said that," whispered Hermione from his side while Umbridge was still ranting.

"I think that was bloody brilliant!" chuckled Ron who sat next to Seamus Finnegan, one row in front of them.

"Yeah..." sighed Harry and turned back to Umbridge. "Just when does she shut up...?"

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After he had finished his classes for the day, Harry reluctantly left his friends to train by themselves after dinner and made his way to Umbridge's office.

He had been in this office often, but he thought he would go blind when he entered after a short knock on the door. When Gilderoy Lockhart had occupied it, beaming pictures of him had been plastered on every available surface. With Remus, it was likely you would meet some dark creature in a cage or trunk if you came to call. In the impostor Moody's days it had been packed with various instruments and artefacts used to detect wrongdoing and concealment.

But now... he shuddered slightly. Now however, it looked unrecognisable. Lacy pink cloths and covers were draped everywhere. Dried flowers were everywhere you looked, each one residing on its own doily. He nearly gagged when he saw the ornamental plates hanging on the wall. Each pictured a large technicolor kitten. He resisted the urge to cover his ears when they 'meowed' loudly and looked at Umbridge, who was sitting behind her desk.

"Good evening Mr. Potter." said Umbridge sweetly.

“Evening,” he mumbled and gave her a fake smile.

“Now, you’re going to be doing some lines for me, Mr. Potter,” she continued as if he hadn’t spoken.

“No, not with your quill,” she added, as Harry took out one of his quills from somewhere in his cloak. “You’re going to be using a rather special one of mine. Here you are.” She handed him a long, thin black quill with an unusually sharp point. “I want you to write, ‘I must show respect to my elders,’” she told him softly.

Harry looked at the quill with narrowed eyes and returned his gaze to Umbridge who was smiling sweetly at him. His lips quirked with grim humor and he put his bag down on the floor before sitting down on the chair.

“How many times should I write it?” he asked casually and twiddled the quill in his fingers after examining it one more time.

“Oh, as long as it takes for the message to sink in,” said Umbridge sweetly. “Off you go.”

Harry sighed and looked at the quill. ‘I already want to strangle her just for giving me a detention... but giving me this quill... she really is nuts!’

He chuckled grimly and turned his head towards the professor who was staring at him with mild curiosity. “You haven’t given me any ink,” he said with fake innocence.

“Oh, you won’t need ink,” said Professor Umbridge, with the merest suggestion of a laugh in her voice. He groaned quietly, so his guess had been right. Harry shook his head and placed the point of the quill on the paper and wrote: I must show respect to my elders.

He sighed in annoyance when his hand started itching. The words had appeared on the parchment in shining red ink. He looked at the back of his right hand, where the words had cut into his skin as though they were traced there by scalpel. The shining cut healed, but

Harry knew that it would just be a matter of time until it would appear again.

Harry looked around at Umbridge. She was watching him, her wide, toad like mouth stretched in a smile once again. "Yes?"

"A blood-quill?" he asked quietly and her eyes widened. "You know that they're illegal... don't you, Professor?"

Harry guessed that she had thought he wouldn't recognize such a quill. That had to be one of the reasons she was staring at him with her large eyes nearly popping out of their sockets.

He waited patiently until she stopped staring, and then continued in a quiet, but threatening voice: "I bet Mr. Fudge won't be very thrilled when he learns of this event..."

Umbridge snorted and stood up. "As if Cornelius would waste his time on such a trivial matter... I imagine he will be pleased that I finally disciplined you."

Harry looked at her oddly. "By illegal means? That's got to be the best joke I've heard in ages."

"Cornelius will stand behind my decision," answered Umbridge with her chin raised.

He nodded with a small pleasant smile. "I'm sure...", he answered with a silky voice.

'I really should stop hanging around Snape and Draco...', he chuckled mentally when Umbridge bristled at his tone of voice. 'But I'm enjoying this way too much!'

"Continue writing!" she snapped after a short pause and Harry obeyed.

Darkness fell outside Umbridge's window. Harry did not ask when he would be allowed to stop. He did not even check his watch. He knew she was watching him for signs of weakness and he was not going to

show any, not even if he had to sit there all night, cutting open his own hand with the quill

“Come here,” Umbridge said, after what seemed like hours. He stood up. His hand was stinging slightly. When he looked down at it, he saw that the cut had healed, but that the skin was slightly red and raw.

“Hand,” she said. He extended it and she took it in her own. Harry repressed a shudder as she touched him with her thick, stubby fingers on which she wore a number of ugly old rings.

“Tut, tut, I don’t seem to have made much of an impression yet,” she said, smiling. “Well, we’ll just have to try again tomorrow evening, won’t we? You may go.”

He stared at her with narrowed eyes. “You said... tomorrow... what do you mean?”

She smiled and tipped the blood-quill with her fingers. “You will come until I see that you have learned to respect your elders. I think this will take some more time.”

Harry left her office without a word. The school was quite deserted; it was surely past midnight. He walked slowly along the corridor, then, when he had turned the corner and was sure she would not hear him he started to laugh as he imagined her face tomorrow morning when Fudge started to brag about his supposed trust.

‘I sure want to know what she will do when she sees the Prophet tomorrow...,’ he thought annoyed but amused at the same time when he entered his Common Room, only to find it empty.

He chuckled once again and went to bed after changing his clothes.

\*\*\*\*\*

When he went down to the Common Room the next morning he was greeted by Nicolas who stood there with a raised eyebrow.



“Harry?” he asked and folded his arms. “How come you weren’t in the Common Room yesterday after dinner? Dumbledore told you that I would be here for introductions and to discuss the Quidditch team.”

Harry shrugged his shoulders. “Morning Nick. I had detention with Umbridge. Didn’t she brag about it?”

Nicolas shook his head. “No. What did you do?”

He grinned slightly. “I arrived late to class after I left Dumbledore’s office yesterday.”

Nicolas shook his head. “And I suppose you ran your big mouth too, hm?”

He chuckled. “Maybe.”

Nicolas sighed. “Be careful with her Harry. She can make your life difficult if she wants to.”

Harry nodded. “Snape told me the same some time ago. But she just sets me on edge. I have an urge to hex her every time I see her ugly face...”

“I’m a teacher now Harry, so watch your comments. Even though I already dislike her as well...” Nicolas chided half-heartedly. “Anyway, I talked about your Quidditch team with your housemates yesterday and everything is settled. Miss Padma Patil is going to schedule the first practice sometime soon.”

“Okay,” mumbled Harry as he adjusted his trainers. “Hey, Nick? Do you think you will be able to watch our training sometimes and help Neville a little bit? To be honest he is not in very good shape, but it’s nothing that can’t be changed by practice. The problem is just that I don’t want to leave Ron and Hermione alone while they’re learning the Dark Arts.”

Nicolas tilted his head. “I think I can arrange something... do you always train near the lake and in the Forbidden Forest?”

"Most of the time," answered Harry as they left the Common Room. "We're a little bit late today, so I guess we'll just do a quick work out. The best time would be on the weekends."

Nicolas nodded. "I'll see what I can do. Until breakfast then," he said when they reached the Entrance Hall.

Harry nodded and went out onto the grounds to meet his friends by the lake. They were already there and Draco, Ron and Hermione immediately stated to run around the lake, while Harry stayed with Neville, who was currently only able to do one lap.

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"Harry, look at this!" exclaimed Hermione who came running over to him from the Ravenclaw table when they were at breakfast. She was clutching the newest edition of the Daily Prophet in her hand and Harry chuckled when she squeezed herself between him and Fred.

"What's going on Mione?" he asked and she gave him a quick kiss before shoving the paper into his hands.

"Look!" she urged.

Harry chuckled and unfolded the paper. He raised his eyebrows at a picture of himself and Draco staring back at him from the front page. His eyes travelled to the headline.

\*

BOY WHO LIVED DENIES HE-WHO-MUST-NOT-BE-NAMED'S RETURN!

Is it all just a plot of Albus Dumbledore?

He shook his head with a bemused smile and started to read the article.

\*

When the Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge, yesterday accompanied the new Head of the House of Phoenix (the recently formed fifth house at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry), Nick Edison and his wife, he witnessed something that should change the perspective of lots of people.

Harry Potter, the Boy-Who-Lived, who was shunned by the public for telling lies about the events from last year's Hogwarts term, denied He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named's return and his words were confirmed by Draco Lucius Black (former known as Draco Lucius Malfoy), who normally isn't on good terms with Mr. Potter.

The Minister himself commented that he was pleasantly surprised by this change.

"I must say, I was shocked at first," he said in an interview yesterday evening. "I was there when Harry Potter and Albus Dumbledore first claimed his return at the end of the last Hogwarts term and I feared that Mr. Potter had fallen mentally ill, but yesterday's events changed my mind."

You may want to know what caused the change of heart and Mr. Fudge, who was accompanied by a professional healer of St. Mungos, had an answer for that too.

"Mr. Potter said in all honesty, that he didn't really know how the late Mr. Cedric Diggory lost his life at the final task of the Triwizard-Tournament. He said that he couldn't remember anything specifically and that it could just have been an accident," said Fudge.

Healer Johnson from St. Mungos also gave us a clear explanation. "Mr. Potter had obviously been in shock. Under those circumstances it's highly possible that when someone tells him that He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named is the cause of the traumatic event, he would believe it."

"After those revelations, Harry now stands under the Protection of the Ministry," said Minister Fudge. "He gave us his trust and it shall not be lost."

But the question is: Why did Albus Dumbledore use Mr. Potter to back up his horrendous claim of his return? Is it all a plot of his to gain attention? Did his fame after the defeat of Grindelwald cloud his judgement? This may be a question which can't be answered...

And at least we asked Mr. Potter personally for his statement. "I have faith in the Ministry, that when they say everything is okay, everything is okay. I would trust them with my life," said Potter.

\*

Harry laid the paper down and stared at the last sentence before breaking out laughing. "That is a good one! I wouldn't trust them to look out for one of my Uncle's old socks for me."

Hermione meanwhile leaned on his shoulder and had a grin on her face. "But you're no longer pictured as if you are nuts. You have the Ministry on your side now."

Harry nodded and looked over to the staff table. Another smile formed on his lips when he saw Umbridge staring at her own Prophet with her mouth agape and a goblet of Pumpkin Juice half-way raised to her lips.

"I think somebody doesn't like this turn of events...", he murmured to himself. "I guess I have to make a fire call or a quick visit sometime in the near future if this goes on."

A grim smile formed on his lips and he chuckled darkly when he met Umbridge's eyes. He raised his goblet at her and winked.

'This is going to be interesting.' he mused when she glared at him.

That was the latest chapter of my story. I hope you liked it!

Don't forget the Reviews!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 19

"Harry!" Hermione called after him when they had finished classes for the day and returned from dinner. "Wait for me! You - oh no..."

Harry, who had just rounded the corner, turned around and chuckled when he saw that her books were now scattered on the floor around her. He shook his head with a bemused smile when as he bent down to help her pick them up. "Y'know... maybe you should just shrink them like Draco, Ron, Neville and I do. It's easier to carry them around."

She gave him a playful glare. "That's what I normally do Harry James Potter! But I had to hurry to get you, so I didn't take the time to shrink them."

"So what's the matter?" he asked, curiously, when they started to walk towards the library, where the five of them were scheduled to meet.

"You still haven't told us what you did that has the Ministry suddenly deciding to take you under their wing. And why did you disappear yesterday morning with Draco? And why were you late to Umbridge's class?" asked Hermione quietly as they passed Madam Pince.

Harry looked around for a sign of anyone looking, and then opened the door to the restricted section. "I'll tell you when the other three get here so I don't have to repeat myself."

Hermione nodded and they took their usual seat at the table in the middle of the large room. Harry decided to start with his long overdue potions homework, while Hermione took out the Daily Prophet once again.

"You're reading that thing again?" asked Ron's voice after five minutes from behind the shelves. "Isn't it getting boring?"

Hermione shook her head and threw him a mild glare. Harry meanwhile was looking at Neville, who really looked uncomfortable

here in the restricted section. His eyes were jumping everywhere, as if he was afraid he might be attacked.

"Relax Longbottom," said Draco and flopped himself down on a free chair. "They're just books. No one's going to attack you."

Harry rolled his eyes. "No need to call him by his surname Dray. He's one of us now," he chided softly.

Draco nodded. "Sorry... I'm just used to calling him that."

They sat in silence for a short while, until Ron decided to show Neville what they had been up to with the books so far. Harry saw that his face was considerably paler when they returned. Even Ron, who was used to it by now, looked a little bit uncomfortable at the aspect of learning Dark Magic.

"So...", asked Ron expectantly when he flopped down on his chair again. "You're gonna tell us where you disappeared to yesterday morning? And you too, ferret?"

"Shut up weasel," growled Draco. "Or I might-"

"No...", whispered Hermione suddenly and they all stared at her. "No, no, no..."

Harry looked at her in concern and when he saw her face, immediately rushed around the table. She was staring at the newspaper in front of her, her eyes seemingly fixed on a single spot. On her face was a mixture of panic, puzzlement, anger and worry.

"Mione?" he asked quietly and rubbed her back softly. "What's wrong?"

She shook her head and pointed to a small article on the second page. "S-sirius was seen. In... in London. They know he's there!"

Harry's frowned as he straightened up. "Dray, you tell them what happened yesterday and who our new professors are. I've got something to do. See ya later guys. "

Draco nodded and Harry swiftly turned around without another word and left them staring after him with worry evident on their faces.

"Um... he seemed worried..." said Neville as he turned to the others. "Wasn't Sirius Black the one who killed his parents?"

The other three looked at each other uncomfortably. "Sirius Black... he's Harry's godfather," said Hermione carefully. "That's why he's worried."

Neville stared at her. "So... the one who's supposed to care for him... wants to murder him? And now that he was seen... Harry wants to do something... I believe?"

Hermione once again looked very uncomfortable and grabbed a book. She looked down at it with a frown and then sighed. "Neville... we can trust you, can't we?"

He blinked. "Of course!" he said without hesitation.

Hermione gave him a small smile. "Good. Then please... wait until Harry tells you about Sirius. Just remember, that he's not what everyone wants to believe."

"D'you think he'll do something stupid?" asked Ron slowly after another small silence.

Draco shook his head. "No... at least I hope he doesn't."

Ron looked out of the small window and suddenly yelped. "Damn... I forgot that we've practice today!" He jumped up and waved at them. "I'll see you later in the forest!"

Hermione sighed as Ron's red hair disappeared behind the door. "Let's hope for the best..."

She turned to Neville. "So then... let's start. We have to review some spells, because you first have to catch up with us. After that Draco, you can tell us what happened yesterday."

Draco nodded and leaned back in his chair, while Neville took a deep breath and threw himself headfirst into work.

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'I once again give Snape a run for his money.' Harry mentally decided with a small smirk plastered to his lips. But a frown soon replaced it while he was striding through the corridors, his robes billowing wildly. 'That mutt must've done something stupid... when I get my hands on him!'

He raised his eyebrows when a small Hufflepuff first year on the way to his common room, dropped his books when he passed him and with a flick of Harry's wand the startled boy had the shrunken books in his pocket.

"Um...", was all Harry heard from the small boy when he passed Peeves, the poltergeist, who was cackling like a maniac before disappearing into the trophy room.

He reached the gargoyle leading to Dumbledore's office and rambled down a list of every sweet he knew. After not even two minutes the gargoyle jumped to the side and Harry stepped on the moving staircase.

He crossed his arms and impatiently tapped his foot on the stony floor beneath him. He raised his hand to knock, but it opened by itself.

"Harry? To what do I owe the pleasure of your visit?" greeted Dumbledore, who was standing near a big stone basin Harry immediately identified as a Pensieve.

"You seem to be a rather frequent guest at the moment," remarked Snape who was standing right next to the Headmaster with a slightly troubled expression.

Harry rolled his eyes, but decided to come straight to the point. "I need to go to Grimmauld Place."



Dumbledore's eyebrows rose. "Why is that my boy?"

Harry scowled. "I need to kick a mutt's ass. Sorry for my language, sir," he added when Dumbledore gave him a small look. "And... I'd like to talk to Reg- Remus."

Snape glided over to him. "And why, Mr. Potter, would you have to do that?"

He just stared at him expressionless. "You don't read the news, do you, Professor? Sirius was seen in London, according to the Prophet. I want to know why he was strolling around."

"I didn't know that," replied Snape and looked at Dumbledore who had a frown on his face while looking at Harry over his half-moon spectacles.

"I understand your concern my boy, but it's too dangerous for you to go there by yourself," said the Headmaster and Harry gaped at him.

"Sir! You're not serious, are you?" asked Harry in disbelief. "I just have to use the floo! Nothing more!"

Dumbledore shook his head. "I'm afraid I can't allow that. I know you can take care of yourself," he added when Harry opened his mouth to say something. "But note that even the floo holds dangers. I believe you experienced that when you accidentally landed in Knockturn Alley when you were twelve."

"For the sake of lemon drops!" protested Harry, and Snape snorted while Dumbledore's eyes lit up with amusement. "I'm not a baby Headmaster!"

"Really? Who would've thought?" muttered Snape.

Harry decided to ignore him and looked at Dumbledore once more. "Please, sir? I'm used to the floo by now. You have no clue how often I've used it during the summer holidays! And... Grimmauld Place is under the Fidelius, so there's no way that someone can get in!"

"I'm afraid it's not possible for you to visit Sirius," answered Dumbledore with finality in his voice and shook his head once again. "It's not that you're there, but rather the way to Grimmauld Place which is dangerous. If it were a real emergency, then you could. And during the holidays too, but there aren't any holidays at the moment."

"Fine!" growled Harry. "At least give me a Howler if you will."

Dumbledore chuckled and with a swish of his wand a fiery red envelope flew into Harry's hand. "Suit yourself with that. It's able to store five lines of writing that will be sent to the one who gets the letter."

Harry eyed the Headmaster. "Thanks, sir. Have a nice evening."

Dumbledore smiled and Harry nodded to Snape before he turned around and left the office. Before he closed the door he could hear Dumbledore say something to Snape.

"Do you have a clue where the ring could be Severus?" his voice sounded urgent.

Snape answered with a sigh. "No, he was rather careful in hiding those objects. He could..."

Harry didn't wait until he finished, closed the door and frowned. 'I don't like how that sounded... I don't like it at all...'

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Half an hour later, Harry left his common room with the red envelope in his hands and a satisfied grin on his face. Who did his godfather think he was that Harry would not get him back for the Howler he had sent? Sirius' sighting in London was a very good opportunity to get his revenge...

He looked back to where the door of the hidden room disappeared and headed off to the Owlery.

"I would not go that way if I were you," said Nearly Headless Nick, drifting disconcertingly through a wall just ahead of Harry as he walked down the corridor. "Peeves is planning an amusing joke on the next person to pass by the bust of Paracelsus halfway down the corridor."

Harry raised his eyebrows. "Does it involve Paracelsus falling on top of the persons' head?"

"Funnily enough it does," answered Nick, sounding bored. "Peeves was never one of the brightest. The Bloody Baron really should keep him more in line... by the way; I just realized that you are no longer in my House."

Harry shrugged his shoulders. "Sorry about that. I was as surprised as everyone else was. I thought the hat would put me in Slytherin for sure..."

Nick looked at him oddly but then smiled. "Well then... bye young Harry."

He decided to take the longer, but safer route to the Owlery and came across Mrs. Norris, who was slinking past him. She turned her eyes on him, as if he had done something to break the rules by walking here and he scowled at her.

"Go away you blasted cat!" he muttered and gave her a small kick and she disappeared behind a statue.

He gave Hedwig the letter and even his owl seemed to be amused by the letter she was delivering, because she had a small sparkle in her eye when she nipped Harry's fingers before flying off.

Harry sighed and leaned at the windowsill. He stared down at the Forbidden Forest and watched some Thestrals flying over the trees. Harry wasn't really an admirer of those leathery dark creatures, but he liked them alright. They were very intelligent when you got to know them better.

The door of the Owlery opened and he slowly turned around to find himself face to face with Cho Chang. His former crush.

"Oh... hi Harry," she said rather shyly with an envelope clutched into her hands.

Harry just nodded. "Hey."

"I hope I don't disturb you...", she said quietly and looked for a suitable owl. "I just wanted to send a letter to my mum."

He shook his head and looked at her from the corner of his eye. "Not at all. Take your time."

Harry turned his back to her and once again looked out towards the Forbidden Forest. The Thestrals were still flying around. His eye caught sight of the Quidditch pitch and he nearly choked on his breath.

"Why didn't he tell me?" he whispered to himself with amusement in his voice.

On the Quidditch pitch two redheads were flying around. One of them was zooming around high in the air and the other one was hovering in front of the goalposts. The one in front of the goalposts was definitely Ron. 'So he's the Keeper now.' The other one zooming high in the air had to be Ginny. She apparently, was the new Seeker for the team.

He didn't even know that Gryffindor had Quidditch practice now. He smiled. Playing against them would definitely be interesting.

He could feel Cho staring at him, and even though it annoyed him slightly, he ignored it.

After five minutes Cho was still there, apparently thinking of a way to approach him and Harry sighed. "Yes?"

He heard her nervously shuffling her feet. "Um... I just wanted to know how you are..."

Harry turned around. "I'm fine. What about you? Are you okay after the end of last term? After Cedric?"

Cho looked down on the floor. "Yes, I... I still miss him, but it's not as bad as it was before. I was wondering if... if we could talk?"

Harry tilted his head and gave her a small smile. "We are talking at the moment."

She blushed. "No... I mean about... us?"

He sighed and abandoned his spot by the window to stand in front of her. "I'm listening."

"Well... I wanted to ask... if you would like to go to Hogsmeade in three weeks. I know, that I refused your offer of a relationship with you when I turned down your invitation to the Yule Ball, but maybe we can try... try to be together now?" said Cho hastily and looked everywhere but him.

"Cho," said Harry softly and forced her to look at him by raising her chin. "I feel honored that you like me, but I have a girlfriend now. And I'm very happy with Hermione. I can't just go around and date other girls."

"But..."

"There is no 'us' in form of anything else than a friendly relationship.", interrupted Harry.

Cho looked at him with some tears in her eyes. "Harry, I know that last year I was... and Cedric..."

"I'm sorry Cho and I apologize for my rude words now, but I won't be a replacement for Cedric.", answered Harry with finality in his voice. "I had a crush on you last year, I admit that, but it was just that – a crush."

Cho looked at him with hurt in her eyes and then sighed. "I understand... I'm sorry for asking. But... I hope we can still be friends?"

He nodded. "Of course we can. But I'm afraid I must be going now. I told my friends I would meet them in the library."

She smiled slightly. "Okay... bye Harry."

"See ya, Cho," he gave her a small kiss on the back of her hand and headed down the stairs.

'That was awkward...' he concluded as he headed to the library.

Halfway there he was greeted by Hermione, Neville and Draco. Neville looked like he had gone to hell and back and had a scared expression plastered on his face. Harry sighed quietly and turned around to go in the opposite direction.

He felt Hermione's hand join his and smiled at her before he looked at his other side where Draco and Neville were walking alongside him.

"And? What did you do?" asked Draco casually as they strode along the hallway.

"Nothing much," replied Harry shrugging. "I wanted to pay Padfoot a quick visit, but Dumbledore wouldn't let me. Then I went to the Owlery to send my beloved godfather a small letter and talked a little bit with Cho."

Hermione bristled and her grip tightened. "With Cho?" she asked with narrowed eyes and Harry's senses immediately screamed 'approaching danger' at him. "As in Cho Chang, Ravenclaw sixth year? What did you talk about?"

Harry eyed her carefully. "Nothing much... she wanted me to go to Hogsmeade with her in three weeks, but I told her that I have a girlfriend. And I meant you."

Hermione looked at him with slight anger. "So you would have gone if I wasn't here?"

Draco snickered next to him and Harry 'accidentally' stepped on his foot. While the blond was cursing quietly, Harry raised his free hand to soothe her.

"Not at all," he answered, and Hermione's face softened. "I told her that my crush on her is over. But I offered to still be friends. We'll see if it works..."

"Argument swiftly avoided," stated Neville dryly and Harry chuckled while Hermione huffed but smiled nonetheless. "Are we... are we still going to train in the forest today?"

Harry nodded. "Yep. It's time that you start to learn how to become an animagus."

"S-so soon?" spluttered Neville, but his eyes lit up with excitement. Harry could still see doubt in them and nodded quickly. "Yes, so soon. We all started to train in our first weeks of training. It takes time, so it's the best way."

"Ron's coming a bit later.", said Draco. "Let's go to the clearing."

"Okay...", murmured Neville and straightened his back when they exited the castle and headed for the Forbidden Forest.

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Harry looked around, his feathers glistening in the dim moonlight, and all his senses on alert. He currently was in his black Shadow Phoenix animagus form and impatiently clicked his beak. He nearly disappeared into the darkness around him because of his dark feathers, and wanted to concentrate, when suddenly a loud melodic trill was heard and a glittering shadow high in the sky disappeared with a bright flash of light and a thundering noise.

'Show-off!' he heard Ron's voice in his head and gave an amused trill.

‘At least I can do it.’ came Draco’s smug reply. ‘I’m going to help Neville and Hermione.’

Harry, who had been sitting high in a tree to hopefully discover how Draco flashed around, ruffled his feathers and his emerald orbs closed as he concentrated.

‘My element...’ thought Harry, when a tingling sensation flowed over his feathered body. ‘I have to use my element...’

The tingling grew and Harry opened his eyes and stared at another tree not far from his current position. Suddenly he felt his pupil’s shrink and his vision go slightly blurry.

He didn’t dare blink as everything but a small passage grew dark in front of him and ended exactly at the spot he had stared at when he had looked at another tree.

Harry gave a mental sigh. ‘That’s what I call tunnel-vision... let’s try my luck.’

He unleashed a small burst of magic and felt his currently winged body... melt and stretch?

His eyes were open and he saw something like a flash of totally black light had engulfed him. And as suddenly as it had come, it was over.

Harry blinked and realized that he no longer sat on the branch high up in the tree, but at the spot he had been staring at before.

He wanted to rise into the air when he felt a sharp pain on his left wing and looked down on it. If a Phoenix could grimace, his expression at the moment surely must have been hilarious. As if on cue, four of his midnight black Phoenix feathers sailed down in front of him and landed soundlessly on the ground.

‘Damn... now I know how a chicken that is plucked feels’ he thought when he landed on the ground and changed back into human shape. He looked down at his left arm and saw that on his hand were four small bruises that looked like someone had tried to kill him with a quill.



He looked up when a fiery red Phoenix came flying down to him, and before it touched the ground it changed into Ron, and Harry could see in the moonlight that he was grinning.

"Did I see right? You did it?" he asked excitedly and Harry nodded a bit hesitantly.

"I guess so... I'm a step closer to getting it right," he showed the redhead his arm. "I just have to keep all my feathers while travelling."

Ron burst out laughing. "You lost some?!"

Harry grinned at his friend with a gleam in his eyes. "Yeah, and it hurt like a bitch."

Ron immediately sobered up as they wandered through the forest to get to the clearing they always trained at. "I just hope that I don't lose too many when I finally get it..."

"Hey Harry!" called Hermione who was sitting with Neville and Draco under a big tree with some books scattered around them and the tip of her wand illuminating the clearing. "And? Did you get it? I heard a loud noise, like thunder, and it wasn't Draco."

Harry shrugged. "Nearly. I lost some feathers in the process."

"Ouch!" winced Draco and Harry guessed that the blond spoke out of experience.

"Oh, that's great!" said Hermione excitedly and abandoned her place at the trunk to give him a hug and a passionate kiss. "I'm happy for you!"

Harry grinned and his right hand wandered down her back while the other one disappeared into her hair. Hermione gave a slight gasp when he moved down to her neck instead of her lips and he traced her elegant jawline with small kisses.

Suddenly Ron cleared his throat and Harry looked at him with slight annoyance while Hermione blushed a bright shade of pink that you even could see even in the dim moonlight.

"Not to be rude... but could you do that some other time?" asked Ron who cowered under Hermione's glare.

"Ronald!" she huffed. "If I have to tell you one more time that you have to stop ruining the mood I'm going to hex you into next week!"

Harry chuckled and hugged the agitated girl from behind. "Yeah... if you have a problem with us kissing, just look away."

Draco shook his head while Ron was muttering an apology and looked at his watch. "We should go to our rooms now. It's nearly eleven o'clock and it already is past curfew."

Harry gave him a mischievous grin. "Don't forget, that you missed your shift today. You were supposed to go on patrol with Daphne till ten o'clock."

The Slytherin's eyes widened. "Merlin! Why didn't you tell me?!"

"I thought you knew and just didn't want to," shrugged Harry when he started to wander off to the castle with Hermione, Neville and Ron.

Draco stood there and when Harry looked over his shoulder, he could see him muttering something before catching up to them.

"She's going to kill me, isn't she?" asked Draco with a groan.

"Yup," answered Harry matter of factly.

Draco glanced at him. "D'you think it'll be painful?"

"Probably," chuckled Ron from Draco's other side.

"Oh stop it!" laughed Hermione when Draco fired a hex at Ron, that nearly hit Neville.

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"What... in the name of Merlin's blue boxers is a 'High Inquisitor'?!" asked Ron grumpily when they sat at breakfast the next morning. "And what the hell did we do to deserve that?"

Harry snatched the Daily Prophet out of his hands and squeezed himself between him and Dean Thomas at the Gryffindor table, deciding that he would just sit here for the day. He snatched some toast from Dean's plate and slowly chewed on it while reading the article.

He stared at the paper incredulously, the toast dropping to the ground. "What the heck?! Listen to this mate!" said Harry and read a part of the article aloud:

'Dolores Jane Umbridge, the Undersecretary to the Minister of Magic and current successful Defence Against the Dark Arts Professor at Hogwarts, was appointed to be the High Inquisitor of Hogwarts in favour of the Boy-Who-Lived's safety.

This step was taken, once again due to the imminent danger from Sirius Black, who yesterday was seen in London.

She has the right to examine the Hogwarts professors and deem them worthy, or not worthy of their teaching positions. Therefore, she will be able to keep an eye on Harry Potter and ensure that he will be safe from danger and trained to defend himself.'

"You've got to be shitting me!" finished Harry, as Ron stared blankly at the paper.

"I just hope that someday she'll fall off of her high horse," voiced Draco who had strolled over to them and was looking over Harry's shoulder to read the article.

Harry nodded and rolled his eyes when he saw that some of the other Gryffindors still glaring at Draco, simply because he was a Slytherin. He looked over at the Ravenclaw table and caught Hermione's eye when she looked up from her conversation with Mandy Brocklehurst.

She looked briefly at the staff table and then shook her head. Harry had just turned to look at Neville, when a shadow loomed over him and he stopped and looked up.

His face formed into a grimace when he saw that it was Umbridge who was standing in front of him. "Yes, Ma'am?"

"Mr. Potter," she said in a dangerously sweet voice. "You have earned yourself another day of detention for not turning up at our appointed meeting yesterday."

"I have?" he asked innocently, but with a snarl on his face.

She pursed her lips. "Yes, you have indeed. I will be expecting you this evening at seven o'clock sharp!"

"Is this a new way to protect me from Sirius Black?" asked Harry and glared at her. "By giving me detention, Madam High Inquisitor?"

"Make it a week!" she snapped and abruptly turned around and marched off to the staff table.

"Busted!" chuckled Ron. "She's really out for your blood, mate."

Harry flicked his wand when Umbridge was halfway to the staff table and she stopped in her tracks. Everyone stared at her as she suddenly opened her mouth and a loud croak came out before she shrieked and where she was once standing, a very ugly pink and brown frog now sat.

Deadly silence filled the room as everyone stared at the toad which seemed to be glaring angrily back at everyone...

As if on cue, a fly flew over the toad's head and immediately the tongue of the former teacher shot forward and the fly disappeared.

"Well, I'll be damned!" said Harry calmly. "Does anyone have a terrarium?"

At that, everyone started to laugh out loud.

That was that. And don't worry Umbridge is in for it now^^

Review, please!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 20

Later in the evening of the same day Umbridge was 'mysteriously' turned into a toad, Harry could be found standing in front of said toad's office with an annoyed scowl on his face. He slowly raised his hand and knocked.

"Enter," came the sickly sweet reply and he opened the door.

Harry once again had to repress a shudder as he entered, and this time pointedly avoided looking at the ornamental plates on the wall when the technicolor kittens 'meowed' pathetically.

He smirked. "Good evening Madam High Inquisitor. How are you?"

Umbridge narrowed her eyes and he saw that her fingernails dug into some paperwork on her desk. "I'm well." He could see that she had to force the next words out of her mouth. "And you?"

He chuckled while sitting down at the desk in the corner. "That's good to hear after your little experience as a toad. And thank you, I'm faring quite well too."

Her eyes narrowed further and her face turned an angry shade of red. "I know it was you!" she hissed venomously. "But believe me when I tell you, that you won't be able to do as you please for much longer!"

Harry raised his eyebrows and looked her coldly in the eyes. "Was that a threat?"

"Start you lines!" she snapped instead of answering his question. "You know what you have to write!"

"Yeah," he murmured and looked at the blood quill in front of him and started to write 'I must show respect to my elders'. "I know what Ma'am... I know what..."

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Hours later Harry put the blood quill down and looked at the back of his hand. The words hadn't disappeared after the first hour of writing and were now shimmering in the form of soft scars on his skin. He carefully made a fist with his hand and small drops of blood trickled down his skin and fell on the desk.

He looked over to Umbridge, who was looking at him from the corner of her eye with a small and sinister smile.

With a roll of his eyes he stood up and slammed the parchment on her desk. She looked at him with her watery eyes, then at the parchment and lastly at the back of his right hand.

"Well, well Mr. Potter. I believe the message still needs a little more time to sink in...", she said softly and traced one of the words on his hand with her stubby fingers.

Harry had to resist the urge to slap her hand away and instead chose to stay silent.

Umbridge looked up with a glare. "I won't tolerate you questioning my authority, remember that."

With a scowl Harry removed his hand from her grasp and stared at her. "I've got a quick question," he said with a voice as cold as ice. "What exactly did you say or do, that Fudge believes that you're a successful teacher?"

"Be careful, or it will be another week of detention on top of the one you already have." whispered Umbridge.

Harry snorted. "Do I look like I care?" He leaned forward and gave her a piercing stare. He noted with satisfaction that she fidgeted a little bit, and smirked.

"Let's make a deal then Professor," Harry whispered with a smirk. "If you're able to live through... the year, then I will personally ensure that you have your job for as long as you please. I'll do as you want me to do and I'll tell the Daily Prophet that you are the best teacher in

the world and thanks to your help I'm able to take on ten Ministry Aurors at once."

Umbridge's eyes lit up with greed and Harry chuckled darkly when he flung his bag over his shoulder. "But... if I notice that the job is out of your league... that you're not able to handle it, you will get fired faster than you can say Quidditch!"

Umbridge glared at him and opened her mouth to retort, but Harry wasn't finished and grinned nastily at her.

"If you don't meet my expectations I can promise you... no, I can swear to you, that your life is going to be worse than hell. Add to that, that I'll have a nice chat with your dear Cornelius after I'm through with you. And the whole Wizengamot will know about the blood quill. I'll make sure the Daily Prophet gets wind of the story as well."

Harry could see sweat forming on Umbridge's forehead and quietly enjoyed the sight of her struggling. "And? Do we have a deal?"

She stared at him and he could practically see the wheels turning in her head. He waited and waited... until Umbridge finally huffed and shoved the paperwork she had been working on into the drawer of her desk.

She stood up and gave him her trademark sickly sweet smile. "Very well Mr. Potter. I don't see why we shouldn't play this little game. I have nothing to fear after all."

'Yeah... except that you're gonna go airborne with that big head of yours...' Harry chuckled inwardly. On the outside however he looked serious and nodded. "Then it's settled. Good luck. You'll need it. I'm gonna make sure of that."

"Don't threaten me, Mr. Potter," she hissed. "Or you will serve more detentions with me."

Harry shrugged and turned around. "It was the truth. And I only stop the threats if you do. Oh... before I forget... if I have to show up for detention tomorrow, again... you know... I really like to crush toads



when I see them... I just love to tear them apart limb by limb, so that they die a gruesome and painful death... no one there to save them..."

Umbridge paled and grabbed her desk to support herself Harry noted when he glanced back. "Have you no shame?" she hissed quietly.

"Nope."

Her eyes narrowed, but her face was still very pale. "You are a nasty ignorant fool. As if you could do anything."

He laughed softly when she regarded him with a look that could kill. "Remember, I like to torture toads. Have a nice evening!" he chirped and slammed the door shut behind him.

"You don't have to come tomorrow!!!" he heard a high-pitched screech behind the closed door and his smile widened as he started to walk towards his Common Room.

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'I could use a drink right now...' he thought when he paced in front of the wall and looked at his hand and flexed it carefully. 'This actually hurts a little more than when I lost those feathers while flashing...'

When the door appeared Harry sighed, looking forward to his bed, and opened it – to stop in his tracks.

He shook his head and blinked. 'Do I still have all my cups in the cupboard? What in the name of Merlin happened to the Common Room?' He took some steps back and looked at the wall across the aisle to see if the tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy really was there and if he was standing in front of the right room.

When he was sure that he hadn't gone the wrong way, he stepped back into the room.

Harry looked around slowly and tilted his head to the side. Instead of his Common Room he now stood in a large room that definitely looked more like a wine-cellar.

Hundreds of shelves full of various alcoholic drinks decorated the wall and he looked up to see the ceiling formed into a large dome. His eyes travelled back down to a large fireplace with a big sofa and two armchairs around it. This sure wasn't Hogwarts standard. Even a small bookshelf stood not far away from that.

"When I mentioned a drink, I didn't expect this!" he muttered when he walked fully into the room and traced bottles of firewhiskey, butterbeer, gillywater, elderflower wine, nettle wine, sherry, red currant rum and even mead with his fingers. "This sure is a large selection."

Harry shook his head when he suddenly realised what he had done that the Common Room had changed so dramatically. His desire for a drink suddenly forgotten, he exited the room and waited until the door disappeared, before once again pacing in front of the wall.

This time however he thought about his Common Room and the word 'Phoenix'.

"Harry?" asked a familiar voice and he stopped. "What are you doing here this late?"

He turned around and saw himself standing in front of Nicolas. He chuckled and rubbed the back of his head sheepishly.

"Would you believe me if I said I got lost?"

"Nope," came Nicolas' simple answer, and he folded his arms. "It's nearly midnight. Pray tell me why you're here?"

Harry looked at his watch with a raised eyebrow and then back at Nick. "You know that I had detention with Umbridge, so why d'you ask?"

Nicolas stared at him. "She... kept you with her until now? You had detention for five hours?" He frowned. "That's not even allowed. Are you sure you didn't do anything stupid?"

Harry threw him a playful glare, but then got serious. "Do you know a place where we can talk? It's not something everyone should hear."

Nicolas nodded his head towards the wall where the door to Harry's Common Room had just disappeared once more. "Why not use the Room of Requirement?"

"You... you know?" asked Harry and blinked. "You know that this isn't only the entry to the Phoenix's room? Why didn't you tell me?"

Nicolas shrugged before starting to pace in front of the wall. "I thought you already knew. You and Draco were the ones who found every hidden room in my Mansion after all."

"I guess so..." mumbled Harry. "I thought it might be something like that, because Dumbledore told me that he had once managed to find a room full of chamber pots. I guessed that it was the same room."

"Well your guess was correct," said Nicolas when the door appeared one more time.

"But how do you know about the room?"

The wizard opened the door and motioned for him to get in. "I found out about it when I was a teacher here."

Harry rolled his eyes. "You are a teacher here at the moment, Nick."

"I meant five hundred years ago."

"Oh..."

They now were in a room that looked like a mix of an office and a potions lab and something suddenly dawned on Harry.

"You are here often, aren't you?"

"Yes. Penny and I looked for a suitable room where we could research and experiment in. This room is just perfect for that, because you don't have to worry about inflicting damage to the castle."

"As long as you don't blow up the whole room I'm okay with that."

Nicolas chuckled when they sat down near the fireplace. "That you better tell the Weasley Twins."

Harry blinked. "They... they know, too? And they're using the room? For what?" he frowned and shook his head. "Um... forget it, I know that they invent jokes... but why didn't they tell us?"

"Damn Harry," chuckled Nicolas. "You're the son of a Marauder, the godchild of another and the honorary nephew of a third. Don't you think they thought you already knew?"

Harry said nothing and as if on cue Nicolas' eyes caught sight of his hand. Faster than Harry could blink he had snatched Harry's arm up and was looking at the back of his hand more closely. After Harry silently let the man examine the scars Nicolas looked up and Harry knew once more why Nicolas Flamel was known as one of the most powerful wizards of all time.

"What... did... she... do?" he asked and his voice was nearly a growl.

With a sigh, Harry told Nicolas about the blood quill and after he finished the wizard and alchemist was seething. "And you didn't see fit to tell me after your first detention with her?"

Harry shrugged and gave him a small grin. "I don't think she will give me another detention for a while. I made a deal with her and she agreed."

"And what might this deal be?" asked Nicolas, but he was visibly more relaxed now.

"Oh...", chuckled Harry and stood up. "You'll see... I personally give her until Christmas, two weeks more if she's still alive then."

"Harry, Harry...", said Nicolas sighing, but a small smile was playing on his lips. "I don't know what you've planned and how you always come up with things like this, but... I think I would enjoy helping you."

"I learned from the best," said Harry and raised his eyebrows. "But Nick... you're a professor now. You can't really help me with that. Heck, for everything that's going to happen I should be afraid that you'll take points from me!"

Nicolas smiled when Harry reached the door. "So I guess I shouldn't do anything about your hand?"

"No," said Harry and waved at him. "I'll do something when the time's right. Goodnight Professor Edison."

Harry closed the door after him and then waited until it disappeared. Then he paced in front of the wall again and...

"Wicked!" he grinned as he looked at the perfectly normal Common Room. "Now that I have to tell the others tomorrow."

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"Harry... why d'you have to drag us up here again after we just went down?" complained Ron when he, Harry and Draco walked up the stairs leading to the seventh floor.

"Cause I have to show you something," smirked Harry when he stopped in front of Barnabas the Barmy.

"And that couldn't wait until Hermione and Neville met up with us for lunch?" asked Draco with a raised eyebrow.

Harry shrugged. "We all have a free period after lunch, so they'll have enough time to join us. What should it be?"

"What should what be?" asked Ron perplexed.

"What should the room look like?" elaborated Harry as if it was obvious.

"But isn't that the entrance to your Common Room?" asked Draco curiously.

Harry said nothing and the blond sighed. "Fine... make it a room where we can train, the clearing in the forest will be rather uncomfortable once it gets colder outside."

Harry nodded and paced in front of the wall while thinking about somewhere to train.

"And now?" asked Ron when the door appeared in front of them. "D'you want us to see the Phoenix's room or what?"

"Open the door and see," smirked Harry, and Ron did so.

When the redhead entered, Harry mentally counted to three and wasn't disappointed.

"Bloody hell!" exclaimed Ron. "That's bloody brilliant!"

Draco looked at Harry in surprise and slowly followed the redhead into the room.

"Well? What d'you say? Is this good enough for training?" asked Harry and both of his friends just nodded with their mouths slightly open.

"How...?" asked Draco. "I'm fairly sure that's normally your Common Room."

"Trade secret," replied Harry and chuckled when Draco glared at him.

Now he took his time and looked around. The room had everything you could dream of using for training, and was divided into four parts.

One part was a rather large library with a large fireplace and comfortable armchairs and sofas to rest on.

Then there was an area, to their left, where mirrors, hurdles and training dummies stood, moving around slightly. Harry could detect a slight golden shimmer around the rather large area and guessed that it was a shield to catch stray-curses.

The third area would have been a dream come true for their resident Potions Master. Harry glanced at Draco and noted that he also looked like he was in heaven.

In front of them was a large potions lab with shelves full of ingredients, which Harry was sure were quite hard to get under normal circumstances.

And lastly, the third part of the room. It was definitely the most stunning. It was an exact replica of Hogsmeade, except that there were no people on the streets. It would be perfect for practicing combat scenarios, and Harry smiled widely.

"Yep. This room is definitely awesome," he remarked.

"Shouldn't one of us go down and fetch Neville and Hermione?" asked Draco and grinned at him. "I bet your girlfriend won't like it if you forget about her."

Harry grinned back and Draco's face faltered. "Well, yes, of course! Draco it's wonderful that you volunteered for the task."

Draco groaned, while Ron chuckled and sat down on the sofa. "Bad luck ferret."

"This was so clear...", muttered Draco when he went to the door. "Now I have to run down seven floors..."

"See ya later!" Harry called after him and the blond threw him a nasty look.

After Draco exited the room – the door nearly fell out of its hinges - Harry conjured two goblets of wine and flopped himself down on the sofa. He noticed Ron looking at him rather oddly, but ignored it. When he went to grab one of the goblets Ron's hand shot forward and caught his arm.

He turned Harry's hand around so that he could look at the back of his hand and the redheads eyes widened when he saw the scars on his skin.

"What did that bitch make you do?!" he asked loudly.

With a sigh Harry softly swatted Ron's hand away and once again reached for the goblet. "She just made me write lines."

"Just lines?!" exclaimed Ron with disbelief. "She... she tortured you! How did she do it?"

"I had to use a blood quill." replied Harry without a care.

"But they're illegal!"

"Really now?" drawled Harry and raised his eyebrows. "I didn't know that."

Ron sighed. "I may have said that she's out for your blood not long ago... but now it looks like she's cutting your skin open... to actually draw blood?"

"Funny isn't it?" remarked Harry. "You would think she enjoys torture."

Ron chuckled slightly and grabbed the other goblet. "So it's definitely official now. She's the stupidest, ugliest and craziest teacher we've ever had. Not even Lockhart was that much of a dunderhead. He was a capable Professor compared to her."

"Don't exaggerate," smiled Harry. "Lockhart was as dumb as a Troll who learned to speak. He knew how to fool people, I give him that, but that's all."



"Yeah... you're right," said Ron. "But Umbitch... I don't know how you're able to be so calm about it. You have to tell somebody about the quill."

He shrugged. "Nick knows about it. And I bet Penny knows about it now also."

Ron furrowed his brow. "Nick... Penny? Ah, of course! They're the Flamels, aren't they? I nearly forgot about that. Draco told us when you sent the Howler to Sirius yesterday. But... why don't they do something?"

"Because I asked Nick not to." Harry's bright emerald eyes darkened slightly. "You said Umbridge is out for my blood, didn't you?" Ron just nodded and Harry looked at the red wine in his goblet while swirling it slightly. The thin scars on his hand shimmering in the light of the fire. "Then I tell you, blood... is what she will get. And this time... it won't be mine."

Ron's head snapped over to him. "Um... mate? Are you serious about that?" he asked, his voice a little bit on the edge. "I know that she's a horrible... thing, but..."

Harry waved his free hand in a lazy manner and Ron quieted down with a sigh. Harry slowly sipped on his wine and smirked. "You can say I declared war on her yesterday. She just doesn't know it yet. She believes she's got the upper hand in this one, but the funnier it'll be to burst her bubble."

The redhead stared at him and started to retort, just as Draco, Hermione and Neville entered the room, the last two with wide eyes.

Harry just stared at his goblet and waited for them to finish their small exploration of the newly 'found' room. Draco flopped himself down on one of the comfortable armchairs and looked at him with a raised eyebrow, before watching Neville and Hermione.

Ron also watched them, but Harry could see from the corner of his eyes, that the redhead's eyes darted over to him from time to time.

"This room... it's awesome!" exclaimed Neville when they also sat down.

"I don't understand it," murmured Hermione while staring at the large bookshelves and then over to the potions lab and the Hogsmeade replica.

"Mione? Care to join us over here?" asked Harry pouting slightly. "I'm here too, you know."

"I know that," answered Hermione and went over to them. "But I still don't understand it," she added when she snuggled down next to him.

Harry chuckled and put his goblet down on the table. He turned his body around so that he was leaning on the corner, and put one leg on the sofa. Hermione smiled at him and slid over. He slung one arm around her belly and she used his abdomen as a backrest while sitting between his legs.

He leaned forwards and gave her a kiss on the forehead. "What does our genius not understand?"

She crossed her arms. "This," she indicated the room around them. "We just came through the entrance to your Common Room... but we aren't in your Common Room. I'm certain of that."

Draco raised his eyebrows. "How d'you know what the Phoenix's common room looks like?"

Hermione rolled her eyes and looked over to him as if he was crazy. "I spent the first night here at the beginning of term. Did you forget that already? You and Ron talked about it for the last three weeks!"

"Right...," chuckled Ron. "So, I guess that this is where we are training from now on?"

They looked at each other and then Harry nodded. "Yep. This is going to be fun."

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Harry groaned when they entered the Transfiguration Classroom after lunch. Professor Umbridge was sitting in a corner, clutching a red clipboard and a quill in her fingers.

"Excellent," whispered Ron, as they sat down in their usual seats. "Let's see Umbridge get what she deserves."

"I forgot that she has the right to inspect the teachers..." muttered Draco when all five of them sat down in the first row.

"I hope she doesn't open her m-mouth," whispered Neville. "I still... feel a little sick when I think about the fly she ate..."

Harry stretched his legs and looked blankly at the board. "At least the schedules are different now and we all have classes together. Imagine how it would be with only one of us is sitting in Defense with Umbitch?"

They all shuddered and then Professor McGonagall marched into the room without giving the slightest indication that she knew Professor Umbridge was there.

"That will do," she said and silence fell immediately. "Mr. Finnigan, kindly come here and hand back the homework - Miss Brown, please take this box of mice - don't be silly, girl, they won't hurt you - and hand one to each student -"

"Hem, hem," said Professor Umbridge, employing the same silly little cough she had used to interrupt Dumbledore on the first night of term. Professor McGonagall ignored her. Seamus handed back Harry's essay; Harry took it without looking at him and saw that he really had managed to get an O.

"Right then, everyone, listen closely - Dean Thomas, if you do that to the mouse again I shall put you in detention - most of you have now successfully vanished your snails and even those who were left with a certain amount of shell have got the gist of the spell. Today, we shall be -"

“Hem, hem,” said Professor Umbridge.

“Yes?” said Professor McGonagall, turning round, her eyebrows so close together they seemed to form one long, severe line.

“I was just wondering, Professor, whether you received my note telling you of the date and time of your inspec-”

“Obviously I received it, or I would have asked you what you are doing in my classroom,” said Professor McGonagall, turning her back firmly on Professor Umbridge.

Many of the students exchanged looks of glee. “As I was saying: today, we shall be practicing the altogether more difficult vanishment of mice. Now, the Vanishing Spell -”

“Hem, hem.”

“I wonder,” said Professor McGonagall in cold fury, turning on Professor Umbridge, “how you expect to gain an idea of my usual teaching methods if you continue to interrupt me? You see, I do not generally permit people to talk when I am talking.”

Professor Umbridge looked as though she had just been slapped in the face. She did not speak, but straightened the parchment on her clipboard and began scribbling furiously.

Looking supremely unconcerned, Professor McGonagall addressed the class once more.

“As I was saying: the Vanishing Spell becomes more difficult with the complexity of the animal to be vanished. The snail, as an invertebrate, does not present much of a challenge; the mouse, as a mammal, offers a much greater one. This is not, therefore, magic you can accomplish with your mind on your dinner. So - you know the incantation; let me see what you can do...”

“I don’t think Umbridge is going to be very pleased” Harry muttered to Ron under his breath with a grin.

"Yes....," muttered Hermione. "But what did you do to her? She always pales when she looks at you."

Harry looked at Hermione and then at Umbridge. She looked around and when she caught his eye quickly looked away again. He shook his head. "I'll tell you later."

For the rest of the lesson they worked in silence while Umbridge sat around in her corner, scribbling furiously on her clipboard.

"Well, it's a start," said Ron when the bell rang, holding up a long wriggling mouse-tail and dropping it back into the box Lavender was passing around. Harry meanwhile looked at the spot his fifth mouse had just disappeared and shook his head when Lavender held the box out to him.

As they filed out of the classroom, Harry saw Professor Umbridge approach the teacher's desk; he nudged Ron, who nudged Hermione in turn and so on, and the five of them deliberately fell back to eavesdrop.

"How long have you been teaching at Hogwarts?" Professor Umbridge asked.

"Thirty-nine years this December," said Professor McGonagall brusquely, snapping her bag shut.

Professor Umbridge made a note.

"Very well," she said, "you will receive the results of your inspection in ten days' time."

"I can hardly wait," said Professor McGonagall, in a coldly indifferent voice, and she strode off towards the door. "Hurry up, you five," she added, sweeping Harry, Ron, Neville, Draco and Hermione before her.

Harry could not help giving her a faint smile and could have sworn he received one in return.

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"I still reckon you should complain about this," said Ron in a low voice and Harry saw that his eyes were once again on the scars on the back of his hand.

The five were once again sitting in the Room of Requirement. It had - in the short time between lunch and now - officially become something like their own personal Headquarters.

"No," said Harry flatly.

"Dumbledore and McGonagall surely... they won't like that and go nuts..." said Neville quietly.

"Yeah, they probably would," said Harry dully. "And how long d'you reckon it'd take Umbridge to pass another decree saying anyone who complains about the High Inquisitor gets sacked immediately? I told you already that Nick and Penny know about it, but they agree with me not to do anything - yet."

Ron opened his mouth to retort but nothing came out and, after a moment, he closed it again, defeated.

"She's an awful woman," said Hermione annoyed while caressing Harry's hand. "Awful. You know, we should do something about her."

"I suggest we poison her," said Draco grimly and Harry smirked.

"No... I mean, something about what a dreadful teacher and person she is, and how we're not going to learn any Defense from her at all," said Hermione.

"Well, what can we do about that?" said Ron, yawning. "It's too late, isn't it? She's got the job, she's here to stay. Fudge'll make sure of that."

"We haven't got anything to worry about anyway," added Draco. "We're already training for ourselves."

"Well," said Hermione tentatively. "I said it some time ago as well. We may have nothing to worry about. But what about the other students?"

"They have no clue," said Neville softly.

"I know what you mean," sighed Harry. "But what should we do?"

"We could teach them," said Hermione.

"You're not serious, are you?" groaned Ron. "It's bad enough as it is with the five of us."

"Yeah," said Draco. "Now that you three have nearly caught on you suggest getting more people involved?"

"But it can't be that difficult," insisted Hermione.

"Hermione," Harry sighed quietly and adjusted his position a little bit. "I understand what you mean and that you want to help the other students, but... we're already walking on very thin ice as it is."

"What... d'you mean?" Neville wanted to know while Hermione and Ron looked at him curiously.

"We're learning dark magic," Harry said calmly. "We're delving into the deepest of the Dark Arts. And we're learning how to use them. This is not something just anybody should be doing." He looked down at his hands and clenched them to fists. "The temptation to use a dark curse on someone who angers you is strong... and it's not easy to withstand it..."

"What do you mean?" asked Hermione slightly worried.

"While Draco and I were training in Romania, I nearly used a dark curse on someone who annoyed me ...," said Harry quietly. "The words had already formed on my lips, but Narcissa - intentionally or not - arrived just at the right moment to let me clear my thoughts."

Hermione hugged him tightly and Harry smiled slightly while enjoying her warmth and her smell.

“Harry?” asked Ron slowly. “What... what was the curse?”

He shook his head. “Sorry, but I won’t tell you. You first have to catch up to where Draco and I are.”

Draco glanced at his watch and sighed. “To get back to the subject at hand... listen Hermione.

If you really want to do what I think you want to do, then we could be in deep shit. If only one of the students we decide to include in the training tells somebody what exactly we’re teaching them... we’re dead meat. What you’re suggesting is basically a one-way ticket to Azkaban.”

“You may be right...,” sighed Hermione. “But there must be some way to help the other students.”

Harry and Draco looked at each other for a short while. Both were thinking the same thing and simultaneously sighed.

“We’ll think of something.”

I hope you guys liked the chapter.

Don't forget to press the review button. It nearly screams for you to tell me your opinion!!

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin



## Chapter 21

Harry grimaced slightly as he looked at the five new bruises on his chest. Somehow he always lost feathers when he flashed in his Phoenix form.

They were currently training in the Room of Requirement, and in the dueling section of the room Hermione was firing curses at some training dummies and dodging and jumping to avoid some of the reflected curses.

Neville was sitting in the library part, busy with his animagus transformation even if he wasn't very successful at the moment, because he wasn't really sure what he would become. Harry could see that he had his eyes closed at the moment and seemed to be meditating to try and see his animal form.

Ron was flying around over the replica of Hogsmeade in his red Phoenix form, and occasionally Harry could see tiny flames dancing around on his feathers – a sign that he was also trying to flash around and nearly had the hang of it.

Harry looked over towards the potions lab section where Draco was. He seemed to be in heaven there and Harry just shook his head. He couldn't really understand how somebody could be that good at brewing every potion he got his hands on.

Harry knew he could brew potions that were necessary for survival or essential for their training. Like Pepper-Up-Potion, the Animagi-Potion, Healing Potions and even Skele-Grow and Polyjuice. He could even do some venomous potions and exploding potions that worked like a hand grenade, but he didn't need them at the moment, did he? And he was proud to say that he could rival Snape with the potions he could do.

He shook his head. But Draco... was currently brewing the Wolfsbane Potion for Merlin's sake! Something even Snape had to be careful with – and he had invented it!

With a sigh Harry vanished his slightly bloody shirt and waved his wand over the bruises, which slowly but surely disappeared. If this goes on I'll be a naked Phoenix by the time I'm finally able to flash without complications, he thought as he headed over to the second part of the dueling section where some training dummies for hand-to-hand combat stood.

He had fought the animated dummy for fifteen minutes before Hermione called them all over to the library section.

"We've got homework to do," she said. "We've got Potions tomorrow and have to look for some Anti-Venoms."

They all slowly finished what they were doing and Ron landed with a 'thud' on the sofa. He had transformed back a little too early it seemed, and did a little free fall.

Draco carefully stirred the Wolfsbane Potion and turned the fire off before he put the cauldron in a cupboard that resembled a Muggle refrigerator.

Harry flopped down on the sofa and immediately a book about Venoms and Anti-Venoms flew from the shelves over to him. He sighed happily. A library like this was sure something. He no longer spent hours searching for a single book.

They all sat in silence for a while as they were busy taking notes and copying drawings of specific ingredients.

"I was wondering," Hermione said suddenly, "whether you'd thought any more about helping the other students."

Draco set his book aside and Harry put his quill down before stretching his limbs. Neville and Ron also looked up from their work with curious expressions.

"Course we have," said Draco carefully and cracked his neck. "But..."

Harry did not answer at once. He pretended to be perusing a page of Asiatic Anti-Venoms because he still wasn't really sure if it was a good idea.

He had given the matter a great deal of thought and talked possibilities with Draco and even with Nicolas. At times it seemed like an insane idea, just as it had on the night Hermione had proposed it, but at others, he found himself thinking about the spells that they could teach without having all that much to worry about.

"Well," he said slowly, when he could no longer pretend to find Asiatic Anti-Venoms interesting, "Draco and I talked a little bit about it..."

"And?" said Hermione eagerly.

"I dunno," said Harry frowning and looked at each of them.

"I thought it was a good idea from the start," said Neville hesitantly. "It's only fair."

Draco shifted uncomfortably in his chair. "You know that it could bring us a whole lot of trouble, don't you?"

"Yes," said Hermione gently, "but all the same, there's no point trying to tell them that Voldemort's back then. It won't do them any good if they can't defend themselves. And they all know that you, Harry, are good in Defense Against the Dark Arts."

Harry snorted. "Course I am... I'm learning the Dark Arts for Merlin's sake! And so are you."

"He has a point there," Ron threw in.

"Hush, you be quiet," said Hermione softly and turned back to Harry. "You were the only person last year who could throw off the Imperius Curse completely, you can produce a Corporeal Patronus, you can do all sorts of stuff that full-grown wizards can't, Viktor always said -"

Harry rolled his eyes and gave Hermione a teasing smile. "Yeah? What did Vicky say?"

"Funny," sighed Hermione in a bored voice and swatted his arm. "He said you knew how to do stuff even he didn't, and he was in the final year at Durmstrang. And that was last year."

Ron was looking at Hermione suspiciously. "You're not still in contact with him, are you?"

"So what if I am?" said Hermione coolly and Harry took her hand so that she wouldn't blow up on him. "I can have a pen-pal if I-"

"He didn't only want to be your pen-pal," said Ron accusingly and Harry raised his eyebrows.

"Ron, don't you think it's Hermione's business who she's writing to?"

Ron looked at Harry in disbelief. "But she's your girlfriend. How can you be so calm about her hooking up with-"

"Shut up!" snapped Harry coolly and looked him in the eyes. "It's neither yours, nor my business. So don't even try to argue about it."

"But she and Krum... she may be ch-"

"Ron... I have faith in Hermione, so don't you dare finish that sentence!" said Harry his voice growing in volume and his hand itching to take his wand.

"Ron, what's wrong with you?" asked Neville quietly. "You're not acting like yourself."

Hermione huffed and slammed her book shut. "Oh yes, he's acting like himself. Just like the prat he is! He's accusing me of cheating on Harry! That is just the tip of the iceberg!"

"I... I just... I didn't mean it like that..." stuttered Ron. "I'm just worried about you. Durmstrang is a school for Dark Arts and Krum was at that school."

Hermione stood up to put her book onto the shelf, which she normally didn't need to do because of magic. She disappeared behind the shelves and Harry sighed.

Neville also sighed and looked at Ron with a frown. "Listen to yourself. You're saying that everyone who's learning the Dark Arts is bad."

"But they are!" insisted Ron and then groaned and sunk deeper into his chair. "Damn... we're learning them ourselves..."

"So your point is?" asked Draco with a raised eyebrow, sounding bored.

Harry, who meanwhile had put his list with Anti-Venoms in his bag, looked up and then asked with a calm voice. "You fancy Hermione, don't you?"

Ron started to splutter incoherently and his eyes widened slightly, "How... why d'you... I don't..."

"Just answer the damn question!" said Harry, a little louder now.

"I... Harry... please don't be mad... no... yes, I think so... but... yeah...", answered the redhead very quietly and his cheeks colored slightly.

"I'm going to be blunt Ron," replied Harry when Hermione slowly came over to them again.

Ron cowered slightly in his seat, but Harry noted that the redhead didn't look away. A good sign at least.

"Forget it," Harry said then. "Hermione and I are together. You're my best mate and I trust you with my life, but Hermione's someone I'd die and even kill for. To tell you the truth... you're no exception there," Ron gulped and Harry looked over to Hermione who had stopped to browse through the shelves. "She's the best thing that's happened to me in the last three years and I really hope it lasts. So it's pointless for you to hold onto your crush."

Ron was silent, but nodded after a short while.

Hermione took her seat again and shook her head exasperatedly, ignoring Ron, who was looking at her and then at the ground over and over again.

She turned to Harry and Draco. "Well, what d'you think? Are we going to help the others?"

"About how many people are we talking here?" Draco wanted to know.

"Well," said Hermione who was putting one of her parchments into her bag now. "I really think you ought to teach anyone who wants to learn. I mean, we're talking about defending ourselves against Voldemort. It doesn't seem fair if we don't offer the chance to other people."

Draco rubbed his head. "Did you already talk about it with someone?"

"Um...", Hermione hesitated. "I talked to Ginny and Luna Lovegood about it... you know? The Ravenclaw girl we've met on the train."

Harry and Draco once again looked at each other.

"Well, we could talk to all those who want your help during the next Hogsmeade weekend," suggested Neville frowning. "It's the second weekend in October."

"Why do we have to do it outside school?" asked Ron, apparently having found the courage to talk again.

"Because," said Hermione, returning to the diagram of the Chinese Chomping Cabbage she was now copying, "I don't think Umbridge would be very happy if she found out what we were up to."

"Yeah...", said Draco slowly. "So we're playing teachers. That'll be interesting when someone's coming."

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The morning of the Hogsmeade visit dawned bright but windy. After breakfast they queued up in front of Filch, who matched their names to the long list of students who had permission from their parent or guardian to visit the village.

When Harry reached Filch, the caretaker gave a great sniff as though trying to detect a whiff of something from Harry, who wrinkled his nose in disgust. Then Filch gave a curt nod that set his jowls quiver again and Harry walked on, out on to the stone steps and the cold, sunlit day.

“Er - why was Filch sniffing you?” asked Ron perplexed, as the five of them set off at a brisk pace down the wide drive to the gates.

“D’you think he wanted a taste of you?” asked Hermione teasingly and Harry paled.

“That’s just wrong...,” shuddered Draco and Harry nodded furiously.

They walked between the tall stone pillars topped with winged boars and turned left on to the road into the village, the wind whipping their hair into their eyes.

“So Hermione, where are we going, anyway?” asked Neville. “The Three Broomsticks?”

“Oh - no,” said Hermione, “no, it’s always packed and really noisy. I’ve told the others to meet us in the Hog’s Head, that other pub, you know the one, it’s not on the main road. I think it’s a bit... you know... dodgy... but students don’t normally go in there, so I don’t think we’ll be overheard.”

“Are you nuts?” asked Harry and Hermione stared at him slightly offended.

“Why?” she asked.

“You want to go to the Hog’s Head? Then you can just ship us over to Azkaban, it’ll make things easier,” said Draco who looked annoyed because the wind was ruining his styled hair.

“Why?” asked Hermione once more, this time stopping and putting her hands on her hips. “It’s perfect. There will be no other students.”

Harry nodded and gently took her hand so that they could start walking again. “Maybe there won’t be any other students, but the Hog’s Head... it’s full of dark wizards and there’s usually an Auror in disguise inside. Not to mention that there’s probably a member of the Order in there now, too.”

“But there’s no other place we could meet and those who know about it will all be waiting there.” answered Hermione.

Harry sighed and then looked at Draco. “Would you be so kind? He always liked you better than me... even if I don’t know why.”

Draco shrugged and smirked over his shoulder as he quickened his pace. “It’s just that I’m able to have a civilized conversation. This usually makes people like me more.”

“Gee, I wish you luck,” snorted Harry. “Having a conversation with you is often as interesting as talking to a doorknob.”

Draco threw him a mild glare and then disappeared behind a corner.

“What’s he doing?” asked Neville, curiously.

“He’s talking to the owner of the Hog’s Head. He’s not very... friendly, but you can count on him. If everything goes smoothly, the pub will be empty while we’re there. And listening-devices won’t be a problem anymore.”

“Damn... you know everybody, don’t you?” asked Ron impressed.

Harry shook his head and drove a hand through his hair. “Nope, just the people that can be of use to me.”

“You know what?” chuckled Hermione. “That just sounded an awfully lot like Snape.”



“Yeah,” nodded Neville with a smile. “So slytherin-ish.”

“That’s not even a word,” said Ron frowning, and Neville shrugged.

They walked down the main street past Zonko’s Joke Shop, where they were not surprised to see Fred, George and Lee Jordan; past the post office, from which owls issued at regular intervals, and turned up a side-street at the top of which stood a small inn. A battered wooden sign hung from a rusty bracket over the door, with a picture of a wild boar’s severed head leaking blood on to the white cloth around it. The sign creaked in the wind as they approached. Hermione, Neville and Ron hesitated outside the door.

“Well, come on,” said Harry and led them inside.

It was not at all like the Three Broomsticks, whose large bar gave an impression of gleaming warmth and cleanliness. The Hog’s Head bar comprised one small, dingy and very dirty room that smelled strongly of something that might have been goats.

The bay windows were so encrusted with grime that very little daylight could permeate the room, which was lit instead with the stubs of candles sitting on rough wooden tables. The floor seemed at first glance to be compressed earth, but Harry knew that it was a stone floor with the accumulated filth of centuries.

The room was completely empty, except for Draco standing on the counter.

“So you’re sure you want us to teach someone?” he asked when they went over to him. “This’ll mean more work for you too, because we have to double your training to stay on the schedule.”

“Yes,” answered Hermione. Neville and Ron nodded. “And I’ve looked up everything I can think of about study groups and homework groups and they’re definitely allowed. I just don’t think it’s a good idea if we parade what we’re doing.”

“Really now?” said Harry dryly. “But it’s not exactly a homework group we’re starting here.”

The barman sidled towards them out of a back room. He was a grumpy-looking old man with a great deal of long grey hair and beard. He was tall and thin, just like Harry remembered him.

"What?" he grunted and Harry grinned.

"Five Butterbeers please," said Hermione.

The man reached beneath the counter and pulled up five very dusty, very dirty bottles, which he slammed on the bar.

"Make it four Butterbeers," said Harry and gave one bottle back "I'd like to have a Gillywater."

"Three," yawned Draco. "I'll take a Gillywater too."

"But that's illegal," chided Hermione. "You're underage."

"Nope, we aren't," smirked Harry. "We're over sixteen. We're old enough to do magic outside of school, so we're old enough to drink."

"Nine sickles," said the bartender and Harry chuckled.

"I'll get them," he said, passing over the silver and leaning forward. "Don't always be so grumpy Abe. It's not good for your health."

"Shut it brat!" was the reply and the man disappeared in the back room once more.

Harry, Draco, Neville, Ron and Hermione retreated to the table in the corner, where they could see the whole pub, and sat down.

"So, who did you say is supposed to be meeting us?" Harry asked, sipping at the Gillywater and licking his lips happily.

"Just a couple of people," Hermione said, checking her watch and then looking at Harry.

"We're doomed," whispered Draco in Harry's ear and he nodded slowly while eying his girlfriend.

"I told them to be here about now and I'm sure they all know where it is - oh, look, this might be them now."

The door of the pub had opened. A thick band of dusty sunlight split the room in two for a moment and then vanished, blocked by the incoming rush of a crowd of people.

First came Dean and Lavender, who were closely followed by Parvati Patil, Cho and one of her usually-giggling girlfriends, then (on her own and looking so dreamy she might have walked in by accident) Luna Lovegood, then Katie Bell, Alicia Spinnet and Angelina Johnson and Colin and Dennis Creevey.

"Isn't he a second year?" asked Neville pointing at the last one.

It was Ron who answered. "I bet Fred and George had something to do with that."

After them came Justin Finch-Fletchley, Susan Bones, then two Ravenclaw boys Harry was pretty sure were called Anthony Goldstein and Michael Corner. Then Ginny, closely followed by a tall skinny blond boy with an upturned nose whom Harry recognized vaguely as being a member of the Hufflepuff Quidditch team and, bringing up the rear, Lee Jordan.

Harry's eyebrows however shot up then he saw who entered next. Granted, first came Fred and George, carrying Zonko bags, but after them came Padma, Terry, Hannah, and then Harry grinned. Blaise, followed by Daphne, came in. So everyone (the first years excluded) in the Phoenix house was there.

"Potter?" asked Blaise. "There are three people waiting outside... may they come in?"

Harry shrugged and Blaise disappeared shortly.

"I don't believe it!" said Draco sounding surprised, but happy.

Harry grinned when he saw Blaise, now followed by Theodore Nott, Adrian Pucey and a girl he hadn't met before.

"It's Astoria Greengrass," whispered Draco. "She's Daphne's little sister, a third-year."

"Um... that's a lot of people," said Neville dryly when he looked around.

"Yes, well, the idea seemed quite popular," said Hermione happily, "Ron, do you want to pull up some more chairs?"

"Hi," said Fred, reaching the bar first and counting his companions quickly, "could we have... twenty-seven Butterbeers, please?"

The barman, Abe, glared at him for a moment, then, throwing down his rag irritably as though he had been interrupted in something very important, and started passing up dusty Butterbeers from under the bar. Harry had to chuckle at this.

"You're right," said Draco. "Abe really needs to loosen up."

"Cheers," said Fred, handing the bottles out. "Cough up, everyone; I haven't got enough gold for all of these..."

"I guess we should write a will, each of us..." muttered Harry and once again sipped on his Gillywater. "This many people just can't be good..."

"What have you been telling people?" asked Draco and looked at Hermione who gulped. "What are they expecting?"

"I just told them we want to learn Defense," said Hermione.

Harry meanwhile was looking around. Cho had just smiled at him and sat down on Ron's right. He tilted his head, but she really seemed to have understood that he didn't want to be more than friends.

His eyes travelled to her friend, who had curly reddish-blond hair and gave Harry a thoroughly mistrustful look which plainly told him that, given her way, she would not be here at all.

He narrowed his eyes. 'She's up to something... isn't she?'

When all the people were seated they looked expectantly at Harry. But he remained silent and seemed to ignore all of them while staring into his drink.

"Er," said Hermione slightly nervous. "Glad you all could come."

The group focused its attention on her instead, though eyes continued to dart back regularly to Harry and occasionally to Draco.

"Well you all know why you're here. I had the idea that it might be good if people who wanted to study Defense Against the Dark Arts - and I mean, really study it, you know, not the rubbish that Umbridge is doing with us, because nobody could call that Defense Against the Dark Arts. Well, I thought it would be good if we took matters into our own hands."

She paused, looked sideways at Harry, who still ignored everything around him, and went on, "And I don't mean just theory, but practicing also."

"You want to pass your Defense Against the Dark Arts OWL too, though, I bet?" said Michael Corner, who was watching her closely.

"Yes, but not only that," said Hermione "I, no, we want to be properly trained in Defense because Voldemort's back."

The reaction was immediate and predictable. Cho's friend shrieked and slopped Butterbeer down herself which finally brought forth a reaction from Harry, who chuckled slightly.

Draco leaned over to him. "Anyone we should throw out?"

Harry put his glass down and looked through the room now that everyone was looking at him. Then he looked back at Draco and used the telepathic link. 'If they really want to train, I will sort it out.'

"Well...", said Hermione. "If you want to join us, we need to decide how we're going to-"

"Where's the proof You-Know-Who's back?" said the blond Hufflepuff player in a rather aggressive voice.

"Well, Dumbledore believes it-" Hermione began.

"You mean, Dumbledore believes him," said the blond boy, nodding at Harry.

"Who are you?" said Ron, rather rudely.

"Zacharias Smith," said the boy, "and I think we've got the right to know exactly what makes him say You-Know-Who's back."

"But the Daily Prophet wrote that Harry took that statement back because he was in shock and Dumbledore just fooled him into saying that," frowned Lavender.

"The Daily Prophet is a load of rubbish," scoffed Blaise annoyed.

"But the Minister said so too!" interjected Michael Corner.

"The Minister has a bad case of Foolinitis," said Luna dreamily. "It's totally normal that he's like that."

Everyone decided to ignore her, but Harry smirked. Luna sure was something. He looked at his four friends and they too had realized that she had just discreetly called the Minister a fool.

'I like her already,' commented Ron through their link and they all nodded.

"But why are they saying he's back now?!" asked Zacharias Smith again. "I mean he's-"

"Are you quite finished now?" asked Harry and everyone's mouths snapped shut.

"The Minister can easily be fooled," he stated calmly when he had the full attention of everyone. "I just got tired of being portrayed as an idiot, so Draco and I had a small chat with dear Cornelius that shut him up. You can see the story we fed him was printed."

"It was a lie?" asked Dean astonished. "Damn! I now know why you were re-sorted into a house that supposedly has the traits of all four."

Harry chuckled and then nodded. "But to tell the truth: Voldemort really is back. You can believe me or not. If not," he waved his hand. "there's the door. I'm not wasting an afternoon trying to convince anyone."

The whole group seemed to have held its breath while Harry spoke.

Zacharias said dismissively, "All Dumbledore told us last year was that Cedric Diggory got killed by You-Know-Who and that you brought Diggory's body back to Hogwarts. He didn't give us details, he didn't tell us exactly how Diggory got murdered, and I think we'd all like to know -"

"If you've come to hear exactly what it looks like when Voldemort murders someone I can't help you," Harry said coolly and his magic flared slightly. "It's a private matter. So if that's what you're here for, you might as well clear out."

But none of them left their seats, not even Zacharias Smith, though he continued to gaze intently at Harry.

"So," said Hermione, her voice slightly angry. "So... like I was saying... if you want to learn some defense, then we need to work out how we're going to do it, how often we're going to meet and where we're going to -"

"Is it true," interrupted the red-haired girl he knew as Susan Bones, looking at Harry, "that you can produce a Patronus?"

There was a murmur of interest around the group at this.

“Yeah,” said Harry slightly annoyed. “And before you ask: It's corporeal. A stag to be exact.”

“Blimey, Harry!” said Lee, looking deeply impressed. “I never knew that!”

“Mum told Ron not to spread it around,” said Fred, grinning at Harry. “She said you got enough attention as it was. She said she protects you from all that stuff.”

“Oh dear me. I have a bodyguard!” smirked Harry and a couple of people laughed.

“And did you kill a basilisk with that sword in Dumbledore's office?” demanded Terry Boot. “That's what one of the portraits on the wall told me when I was in there last year...”

“Yeah,” said Harry. “It was a nasty little snake, I tell you.”

Justin Finch-Fletchley whistled; the Creevey brothers exchanged awestruck looks and Lavender Brown said “Wow!” softly.

“And in our first year,” said Neville to the group at large, “he saved the Philosopher's Stone from Voldemort.”

The group looked at him with wide eyes. Not one of them would have thought that Neville, Neville Longbottom, the scaredy cat, of all people, would call him by his name.

“And that's not to mention,” said Cho. “all the tasks he had to get through in the Triwizard Tournament last year - getting past dragons and merpeople and acromantula and things...”

There was a murmur of impressed agreement around the table. Draco nudged him and Harry sighed.



"Look," he said, and everyone fell silent at once, "I admit that I'm good at Defense, but I had help, too." He raised his hand when someone started to interrupt. "Let me talk first. I did some things alone as well. I fought a basilisk with a sword, but I was lucky still. I fought the dragon in the first task last year and I'll tell you, I had really interesting holidays this year."

"What do you mean?" asked Cho and everyone stared.

Harry smirked at Draco who smirked back. "I spent some time with Draco and let me tell you that we learned that dragons, chimera and other magical beasts are not very tame."

"You're kidding, right?" asked Lee Jordan.

"Nope," chuckled Harry. "And let's just say I had a very short meeting with some dementors too. But I really don't think it's a good idea to do what Hermione suggested."

"Are you trying to weasel out of showing us any of this stuff?" said Zacharias Smith.

"Here's an idea," said Ron loudly, before Harry could speak, "why don't you shut your mouth?"

Perhaps the word 'weasel' had affected Ron particularly strongly. In any case, he was now looking at Zacharias as though he would like nothing better than to thump him. Zacharias flushed.

"Well, we've all turned up to learn from him and now he's telling us he doesn't really want to teach us," he said.

"Because it's dangerous," snapped Harry. "We're not talking about playing chess here. We're talking about learning serious magic. And I'll tell you now, and I'll tell you only once: I will only teach someone who can keep his trap shut!"

"What are you implying?" asked Zacharias venomously.

"That you should move your ass out of here. You are someone I'm definitely not going to teach anything to," said Harry calmly. "And I bet my friends think so, too."

Zacharias stood up and threw his chair on the floor when he did so. "How dare you?! Who do you think you are?!" he raised his wand, but Harry was quicker.

Moving so fast that no one had really seen him move, Zacharias found himself pinned against the wall by Harry. A dagger at his throat. His wand lying useless on the floor.

The eyes of the other students in the pub were wide.

"Who am I? I believe I'm Harry Potter," said Harry quietly, calmly. "But Harry Potter is going to lose his temper if you don't get your sorry ass out of here immediately."

"Why you...", growled Zacharias and Harry let his dagger disappear.

He still held him by his cloak however and dragged him out of the room. All eyes following him when he slammed the pub's door shut.

"Did you see him move?" asked Collin in awe and everyone shook their heads.

Draco scoffed and sipped on his drink. "That was nothing."

Ron chuckled. "So I guess you want to be taught by him? And us for that matter?"

There were murmurs of agreement and the four friends smiled while some of the students continued to occasionally glance at the door where Harry had disappeared.

Draco looked around and his eyes rested on Dennis Creevey. With a sigh he looked at the others and then back at the small boy. "Dennis?"

The boy's head shot up and he stared at Draco with wide eyes. "Yes?"

"I'm afraid," began Draco, "that you are too young to learn what we will be teaching. I'm really sorry," he added after the boy opened his mouth with a hurt look in his eyes, "but it's dangerous and we can't risk anybody getting hurt when we aren't looking."

The younger Creevey looked at Hermione, Ron and Neville for help, but they also shook their heads.

"He's right," said Hermione softly. "The material we'll be going through is too advanced for second years."

'Harry', Draco asked mentally. 'Would you take Dennis Creevey with you when you're finished?'

'Sure,' came the reply as he stuck his head back in and looked around. "Marietta Edgecombe? Would you please come out here? There's someone waiting for you," he asked in a totally innocent voice and she nodded. "Dennis, you can come out, too."

Marietta reached the door and disappeared. Dennis slowly followed her with his head down in disappointment. Hermione, Ron, Neville and Draco shared a look and then simultaneously chuckled slightly.

"She's out," said Draco quietly and they nodded.

"Hem, hem," said Ginny, in such a good imitation of Professor Umbridge that several people looked around in alarm and then laughed. "Shouldn't we try to decide how often we're going to meet and have defense lessons?"

"Yes we should," said Harry who entered the pub once again and flopped down on his chair. "You're right, Gin."

"Well, once a week sounds cool," said Lee Jordan. "Or maybe twice."

"Or thrice," chirped George and chuckled.

"As long as -" began Angelina.

"Yes, yes, we know about the Quidditch," said Hermione and rolled her eyes.

"We'll tell you when and where the first meeting is," said Harry. "But just so you all know, none of you will be able to tell anybody about this meeting. It'll have... unpleasant side effects if you do."

"I don't want to know what those could be," said Dean and cringed slightly.

"One more thing," said Harry when they all started to get up. "Those three people that I took out of the pub with me aren't to be told about anything. They have no knowledge of the meeting that had just transpired here. So no telling, Collin, Cho. Is that clear?"

They nodded and the students all waited to see if anyone had anything else to say.

"Well then, time's a tickin'," said Fred briskly, getting to his feet. "George, Lee and I have got items of a sensitive nature to purchase; we'll be seeing you all later, Harry."

In twos and threes the rest of the group took their leave, too.

"Well, I think that went quite well," said Hermione happily, as she, Harry, Neville, Draco and Ron walked out of the Hog's Head into the bright sunlight a few moments later.

"Did you obliviate them?" asked Neville curiously. "This Zacharias guy and the other two, I mean?"

Harry just nodded and they slowly walked down the street.

"So? You want to go shopping for a little bit?" asked Draco and looked around on the busy street.

"Hmm... I could do with a new quill," nodded Hermione and grabbed Harry's hand.

She turned into a shop and they all followed her. When they entered, Hermione stopped at the shelf next to the door and frowned.

"But I could just go to the Room of Requirement...", she mumbled to Harry while she examined a long black and gold quill.

Harry, who was having a little debate with himself about whether he should write a will and cart himself off to Azkaban beforehand, just nodded.

So they left the shop once more and continued their way down the street. When they reached the gates to Hogwarts half an hour later, Hermione smiled mischievously at him and he raised his eyebrows.

"I sense something I'll like," grinned Harry and Hermione blushed slightly while nodding.

"So?" he wiggled his eyebrows. "We have patrol this evening, don't we?"

"Yes...", she said slowly and he laid an arm around her shoulders.

Harry just grinned when as went to their respective Common Rooms.

That was the latest chapter. I hope you liked it and give me a Review while I'm not here.

Until next time (Three weeks, remember?)

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin

## Chapter 22

On Monday morning – two days after their meeting in Hogsmeade - Harry yawned and sat up in his bed. He stared out of the big dorm window and a grimace formed on his face when he saw the thick clouds looming on the sky, darkening it.

“Looks like the summer’s finally over, eh?” asked a sleepy voice to his left and Harry looked at Blaise who was standing near his cupboard, a pair of socks in one hand, while brushing his dark hair with the other.

“Yeah...,” Harry nodded and went over to his own cupboard. “And Padma just had to set the first Quidditch practice for today...”

“I don’t understand why we have no classes today anyways...,” mumbled Blaise absentmindedly. “It’s no holiday or something like that.”

Harry just shrugged. It suited him just fine, because it meant that he didn’t have to sit in Umbridge’s class for the day, being bored out of his mind.

Now Terry joined their discussion with a groan from the other side of the room. “I hate Padma... I bet she heard the muggle news or something and did it on purpose!”

Harry rolled his eyes. “It’s impossible to use any kind of muggle technology in Hogwarts.” He smoothed his white muscle shirt and put his wand-holster on his right arm. “Padma had no way of knowing today’s weather. And the Daily Prophet arrives only at breakfast.”

Suddenly the bathroom door opened and Ernie came out. They all sighed irritably when they saw the smug grin on the ex-Hufflepuff’s face. “It’ll be a good training for you I bet. It’s more difficult to fly and the Snitch and the Bludgers are much harder to spot.”

Terry threw a pillow at him and rolled out of his bed while Blaise gave an annoyed huff. “You’re the one to talk! You’ll be in the Common

Room with Rose and Euan, teaching them about Quidditch rules and history.”

Ernie held his hands up in a defensive posture. “Hey! It’s not my fault that they’re both muggleborns!”

“I’ll meet you after breakfast then,” said Harry and pocketed his shrunken Firebolt.

The three other boys nodded and Harry left the dorm, very well aware that one of them was following him.

“Potter?” called Blaise when Harry reached the door. “Harry?”

He turned around and looked at Blaise when he was sure the Common Room was empty except of them.

Blaise opened his mouth to say something, but Harry held his hand up and shook his head. “I know... and your guess is right. I can oblivate you if you’ve decided to change your mind.”

The ex-Slytherin raised an eyebrow in return. “So you’ll really be teaching the Dark Arts?” He frowned. “Isn’t that a little risky?”

Harry shrugged. “You can’t beat Voldemort with a simple Expelliarmus.”

“But you did. Or so Draco says...”

“I distracted him with it. Nothing else,” replied Harry simply. “And that was just possible because of my wand. I won’t go into detail why this is the case.”

Blaise nodded in understanding. “Doing something like this directly under the nose of a Ministry official... that’s really a bit dangerous, isn’t it?”

“Don’t remind me,” answered Harry with a dry chuckle and looked at his watch. “Sorry, but I’ve gotta go. Tell me if you change your mind

or not. You've got time until next Friday, that's when the first meeting probably will be held."

After Harry had left a slightly thoughtful Blaise behind in the Common Room he waited until the door disappeared and then started to pace in front of the wall to enter their training-room. His thoughts were lingering on Blaise and how he knew that they won't only be teaching light spells.

The door had just appeared when Draco rounded the corner and raised an eyebrow as he saw the slight frown on Harry's face.

"What's the matter?" he asked and opened the door

Harry eyed his friend out of the corner of his eyes when they entered. "Your friend Blaise... is either very observant, or just really sharp-minded."

Draco tittled his head and they sat down on the armchairs near the empty fireplace. "Yeah. You could say he's both. Why?"

Harry leaned back and several books flew over from the shelves and landed on the table in front of him. "Tell me... how did Blaise come to the conclusion that we're going to teach some of the Dark Arts?"

Draco chuckled. "He noticed, didn't he?" He shuffled through a stack of papers with different potions written on it that had flown over to him from the potions section and then looked at him. "He must've seen it in your aura."

Harry stared at him with slight disbelief on his face. "He's able to see auras?"

When Draco nodded he shook his head and frowned. "This is not something you can just do, Draco. And you know that yourself as well as I do, because we're trying to get that down since we started training."



"He was born with it," shrugged Draco. "I know that it's one of the most difficult things to learn - that's out of question - but he says he's able to do it as long as he remembers."

"Then he's lucky," said Harry still slightly surprised and stared down at one of the books in front of him. It was about magical ways of silent communication. "But that doesn't really explain how he knows what we'll be teaching."

Draco tittled his head and more papers landed in front of him. "He probably saw the change in your aura. He once told me, that someone who just uses light magic has a white or very softly colored aura. The color depends on the person's personality. Someone who has a specific trait or can turn into an animagus usually has two or more colors. He said McGonagall for example has an aura split in four different colors. But don't get me started with Dumbledore."

Harry chuckled. "The old man's probably a whole rainbow. But let me guess... someone who's learning dark magic has a much darker aura and the colors are no longer soft, but more defined."

Draco nodded and looked up from his stack of papers when Hermione entered the room with a small yawn. She wasn't wearing the school cloak today, but black jeans and a white and blue pullover.

"Good morning Harry. Draco," she greeted and sat down on Harry's lap.

With a smile she leaned down and gave him a deep kiss. When she slid off of his lap and sat down next to him, the other two entered and Neville sat down on the last free chair, while Ron yawned wildly and flopped himself down on the sofa with his feet high in the air and his hands clasped over his face.

Hermione sighed exasperated and looked out of the window and then at Harry. "Do you really have practice after breakfast?"

Harry nodded. "Yeah... I think there's no way around it today. I guess you'd better stay in the school then." Hermione opened her mouth,

but Harry silenced her with a small kiss. "I know you wanted to come, but you'll just get a cold in this weather."

"Since when are you interested in Quidditch?" asked Neville surprised.

Hermione frowned. "I'm not really interested in the sport and the games, but it's interesting to watch people flying around when it's just for the fun of it."

"Playing in a game is also just for fun," stated Draco and Hermione nodded.

"Maybe it's part of it, but there's always the competition and it ruins some of the fun."

With a snort Ron looked up at them from his lying position. "When you're okay with flying when it's just for fun, then you can go flying yourself also, can't you?"

Hermione was silent and bit her lip. Then she looked at Harry and smiled slightly. "I guess I can try flying when it's not because of something dangerous like rescuing someone on a hypogriff."

Harry chuckled and when they finally brought Ron to sit up they started to work on their new training schedule and their plans for the Defense Group.

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"I don't get it!" cursed Terry and stared at the one other ex-Ravenclaw after breakfast when they slit down the now wet grass to the Quidditch field.

It had started to rain shortly before breakfast and seven slightly grumpy Quidditch-players followed a seemingly happy Padma down to the pitch.

"Why do we have to play in this weather again?" asked Daphne with a dark look on her face when a strong gust of wind nearly threw her broom out of her hand.

Padma stayed silent until they reached the locker-rooms and then she turned around with her hands firmly on her hips, looking at each of them with an expression that really reminded Harry of his former Quidditch captain Oliver Wood.

Fred and George seemed to have the same thought, because they chuckled slightly.

"We're extremely late for having our first practice, if you've noticed," said Padma sternly when they positioned themselves in a half-circle around her. "It's the middle of October. The other teams are training for at last three weeks already and have the big advantage to know each other."

"But we know each other too!" pointed Hannah out.

Harry chuckled quietly and they all looked at him. "I don't know anybody of you, except for Fred and George."

"But-," started Daphne perplexed and looked around to everyone except Padma looking as baffled as herself.

"Let me explain," said Harry and looked at Padma who nodded. "Of course I know all of you, but I never played Quidditch with anybody of you except the Twins. I don't have a clue how each of you plays in a team."

"Exactly," nodded Padma and pointed at Blaise. "The Keeper has to know where the Chasers will catch the ball he throws at them and when he has to get ready to save a goal," she pointed at Daphne, Hannah and Terry. "The Chasers have to know each others movements and be able to predict where they have to throw the ball to." Padma started pacing in front of them and looked at Fred and George. "And each of the players must be able to trust the Beaters to keep the Bludgers away from them. The only one who really hasn't much to worry about with his team-play is Harry, who just has to look for the Snitch and avoid the Bludgers."

“But what has it to do with training in this miserable weather?!” whined Terry after a short silence.

Blaise looked at Padma and then out of the window where a full-fledged storm was giving his best now. “If we can play well in this weather, we won’t have any problem with our teamwork under better conditions and our movements will be much more precise because we have to be careful not to drift off in this weather.”

Harry clapped his hands. “So what are we waiting for? Let’s get it started!”

He opened the door and left the room. Even before he had enlarged his broom he was wet to the skin and standing ankle-deep in the mud.

“This’ll be fun...,” he mumbled when he mounted his broom and rose into the air.

A little more carefully than normal he flew some rounds around the pitch to get used to flying on a broom again. He hadn’t been flying on a broom for more than six months and was used to fly around as a Phoenix by now, so needing a broom to fly was a little odd for him.

“Harry, I’ll release the Snitch and the Bludgers for you while the others are warming up. I want to see you chasing it around as if your life depends on it!” shouted Padma.

Harry chuckled. “That’s a little exaggerated,” he said and the Snitch zoomed around his head before disappearing in between the thick rain-drops.

He immediately had to duck both Bludgers when they came racing at him at full-speed and did a small looping to get rid of them. He frowned when he heard a swishing sound and looked at the two Bludgers that were flying in front of him. Where was the sound coming from?

He shook his head. The better question was: What was making the sound?

Harry rose higher into the air while looking at the two Bludgers. When he turned around as the swishing sound once again appeared his eyes widened.

"Holy shit!" he cursed and rolled around on his broom to avoid two more Bludgers.

With a sharp turn of his broom he dived down once again and started to search for the Snitch. While his eyes drifted over the field and from Bludger to Bludger. In total there were eight of them now and he guessed that he never in his life had to do so many maneuvers and tricks to avoid getting hit.

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"You weren't kidding when you said my life depends on the Snitch," grumbled Harry at Padma after thirty minutes when the Snitch was safely in his right hand.

He glared at the Bludgers that immediately went motionless.

"Told you so," grinned Padma and blew her whistle so that the rest of the team would come over. "Now you're going to play three against three. Harry, Fred and George, you'll be playing against the others. You three know how each other plays, so you can be a better challenge for the Chasers."

"Yes Ma'm!" saluted Fred and George who seemed to have no problem in the weather at all.

Harry wiped over his wet face and was thankful that he didn't need his glasses anymore. He remembered all too well how blind he had been in his third year before Hermione had cast a charm on them.

"You're all playing on Blaise's goal," Padma shouted after she was on the ground again with the Quaffle in her hands. "I want to see everyone playing with their full power!" She threw the ball high into the air. "GO!"

Harry didn't even try to dive after the Quaffle, but flew over to Fred and George to tell them something. He didn't bother to whisper, because the wind was loud enough to hinder the others on overhearing them.

The Twins nodded and flew over to Daphne who currently had the Quaffle – fighting against the strong wind. While George attacked her, Fred flew down slightly and hovered a meter over the ground. Daphne tried to pass the ball, but Terry wasn't fast enough and George caught it. Simultaneously Fred started to race forwards, still not far from the ground.

Harry looked around and saw Hannah flying at the goalposts near Blaise and Terry trying to reach Fred, while Daphne raced after George.

He smirked and dived down, so that his feet touched the ground and leaned flat on his broom. In no time he was flying exactly under Fred and rolled around so that his back was facing the ground. He couldn't be seen by the others now.

He saw how George passed the ball over to his brother and when it reached Fred, the redhead pretended to catch it and leaned down on his broom so that the Quaffle was no longer seen.

Harry grinned when Fred chuckled and the Quaffle fell down in his outstretched hand. He himself slowed down now and sat back upright, while Fred raced forwards to the goals. Immediately Daphne and Terry flew after him – their eyes darting between the Twins – forgetting all about Harry.

He relaxed, rounded the pitch and then flew over to the goals. When he passed Padma he caught her eye and gave her a small victory sign.

“Hey Blaise!” he called and then threw the ball with full force through the left goal.

Blaise's eyes followed the ball, startled, and Padma blew her whistle. Harry shook his head to get the wet hair out of his eyes and flew down to the captain.

"What the heck was that?" asked Blaise when they got off their brooms.

"Yeah!" demanded Daphne. "Fred had the Quaffle! How come you threw the goal?!"

Fred, George and Harry grinned at each other and Padma laughed excited.

"I never really caught the ball," answered Fred grinning.

"What?" asked all of the others simultaneously and Terry shook his head. "But I saw how you caught it and dashed forwards!"

"That was what I call teamwork," chuckled Padma. "Why don't we just put you three as Chasers? Then we don't have so much work ahead of us," suggested the Indian girl jokingly and looked at Harry. "I guess the trick you just pulled was your idea, so you're going to teach it to Daphne, Terry and Hannah. You've got two hours."

"I still don't get it," shrugged Hannah perplexed.

"Just wait..."

"-we show you," said Fred and George.

"Watch carefully," added Harry and rose in the air once again...

\*\*\*\*\*

"You look like shit, mate," commented Ron when Harry and the rest of the team entered the Great Hall for lunch.

They all were covered in mud from head to toe and Harry really felt like he had not a single clean spot on his body.

Draco chuckled. "I'm just happy that we don't have training today."

Harry scowled at him. "Yeah, because you set the date and time for the practice."

The blond shrugged. "That's the favor of being the captain."

"Really, you look like you live in a hole...", grinned Neville broadly.

"What did you expect?" giggled Hermione when Harry wished some dirt off of his nose and hair. "Look at the ceiling then you see under which conditions they trained."

Harry carefully sat down next to Hermione and helped himself to some food. "What are you doing here anyways? Normally we all sit on our own tables for lunch."

Draco and Ron looked at each other and then at Ernie who was sitting next to the two first years, clutching a piece of paper with a very worried expression on his face.

"We've got something here... and we're not sure what to make of it," said Draco unneeded and Harry leaned over the table and grabbed the paper out of Ernie's hands to read it.

It was looking like an very official letter and at the bottom was a neat and curly signature.

\*

#### BY ORDER OF THE HIGH INQUISITOR OF HOGWARTS

All student organizations, societies, teams, groups and clubs are henceforth disbanded.

An organization, society, team, group or club is hereby defined as a regular meeting of three or more students.

Permission to re-form may be sought from the High Inquisitor (Professor Umbridge).



No student organization, society, team, group or club may exist without the knowledge and approval of the High Inquisitor.

Any student found to have formed, or to belong to, an organization, society, team, group or club that has not been approved by the High Inquisitor will be expelled.

The above is in accordance with Educational Decree Number Twenty-four.

Signed: Dolores Jane Umbridge, High Inquisitor

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Harry dropped the fork and stared intently up to the staff-table where Umbridge sat, happily munching her food.

Padma, who had read the note over his shoulder started to shake him furiously. "You all know that this includes Quidditch as well, don't you?! Our team is disbanded! Did you hear me?!"

Harry pushed her hands slightly annoyed away from him and looked around.

"D'you think she knows about our group?" asked Neville quietly "Or is it just... a coincidence that this appears two days after our meeting?"

Harry scowled darkly when he met Umbridge's eyes. "Maybe it is a coincidence... but then it's one I'm planning to shove up her damn ass!" He stood up and felt his own magic flaring around him in angry pulses.

He immediately felt Dumbledore's eyes on him, but ignored it for the time being and stalked over to Umbridge. With a huff he slammed the paper in front of Umbridge with so much force, that the staff-table shook a little bit.

"What is that?" he asked in a dangerously low voice and the whole hall quieted down to listen.

Umbridge looked up startled and narrowed her eyes at him after she had looked at the decree. "I would have thought you are able to read Mr. Potter," she stated sweetly. "As you can see this is a Ministry decree."

Harry rolled his eyes and once more grabbed the paper. "I want to have a clear answer," he hissed and suddenly the paper burst into black flames. "What... is... this... about?"

Umbridge didn't answer, but was staring wide-eyed at the paper in his hand and the flames that were growing, licking on his wrists, without hurting him in the slightest.

"I... I don't have to answer a mere students question," said Umbridge then and looked briefly in his eyes before quickly looking away again.

"I don't like to repeat myself," growled Harry and the black flames intensified, just like his glare. "Why is every club, team or group to be disbanded until it's reformed and approved by you?"

"This shall be none of your concern," replied Umbridge with one of her fake coughs.

Dumbledore cleared his troath when the plates and glases on the staff-table started to shake slightly. "I believe we're all interested why this decree was deemed necessary, Dolores."

The headmaster looked at Harry from the corner of his eyes and Harry leaned away from Umbridge. He took a deep breath and the flames in his hand died down. Left was just a small heap of ash that fell on the floor and the desk.

"The Ministry doesn't need to present reasons for invoking new decrees concerning the education of students," spat Umbridge while staring at the small heap of ash on her desk.

"I believe it to be a lost cause Albus," came Snapes oily voice from beside Nicolas, "We could ask her the same question over and over again. She won't answer."

Umbridge huffed angrily and with another of her fake coughs stormed out of the Great Hall, away from all the students that were staring at her.

Harry clenched his fists when he looked after her. He really was itching to hex her into next week. Slowly he turned around to face the headmaster and took a deep breath. "Can I at least talk to you privately?"

"Certainly, my boy," replied Dumbledore nodding. "How about my office in five minutes? Then you have a little time to clean yourself up."

Harry looked down at his dirty Quidditch robes and nodded curtly before leaving the Great Hall. When he passed Fred and George he slightly tittled his head and nodded then very slowly. They grinned from ear to ear and gave each other high-five.

Despite his slightly bad mood, Harry grinned and went up to the headmasters office. Before he tried to enter he waved his wand over himself and his dirty Quidditch robes were replaced by a casual red sweater and black jeans.

To his surprise the gargoyle guarding the headmasters office didn't require a password from him and he just stepped on the moving staircase without it.

He smiled softly when he saw Fawkes sitting on his perch, looking back at him and tittling his head. 'I see you took my advise to heart, child,' he heard the deep voice of the Phoenix in his head. 'You learn the ways of our kind very fast.'

Harry nodded. 'Thank you, but I still loose some feathers while transporting myself with the shadows.'

Fawkes clicked with his beak in understanding. 'It takes time to get rid of that nasty little side effect. Have patience and practice it.'

At this moment Dumbledore entered his office and Harry's head immediately snapped over to him with a slight 'crack' that made himself and the headmaster wince slightly.

"I want her gone," he stated calmly. "Now."

Dumbledore sighed and gestured Harry to take a seat in front of his desk while he himself sat down behind it. "I'm afraid this won't be possible."

"Then make it possible," responded Harry and crossed his arms in front of his chest. "You're the headmaster here. I know the reason she invoked that stupid decree, because I used Legillimency on her. And I tell you, if she pulls something like that again someone will be in very grave danger this year."

"So you also know that she presented an entire different reason to the Minister to get her wish?" asked Dumbledore with a slight twinkle in his eyes.

Harry snorted. "Of course. She couldn't very well have said that she doesn't like the fact that the Quidditch team of my house is too good for her liking now, could she? Seriously, she must really hate the new house to invoke a decree because of Quidditch. A game!"

Dumbledore shuffled through the drawer of his desk and took out a small glass of lemon drops. "Do you want one?"

Harry couldn't resist the urge to chuckle and popped one of the sweets into his mouth. "Thanks. But sir, a Cheering-Draught won't do any good for me now."

The headmaster smiled. "You're the second one who noticed the little side effect of the sweets. The first had been Professor Snape."

"I can imagine," nodded Harry and then his face turned serious once more. "How can the Ministry believe her ridiculous claim? They don't actually believe that you're trying to get the Minister's post, do they?"

Dumbledore shook his head. "Alas, that's exactly what Cornelius fears. It is a very far-fetched reason to act on, as I have refused the post two times already."

Harry stood up and started pacing. "Professor, with all due respect, but what were you thinking? You gave Umbridge the responsibilities coming with a teacher's post and she absolutely isn't suited for something like that. She's biased, narrow-minded and just plain dumb to begin with."

Dumbledore also stood up and went over to Fawkes. He petted the Phoenix who gave a trill of happiness and shook his head. "Some things just can't be avoided. There are things not even a headmaster can prevent."

With a shrug Harry turned around and looked out of the window. The storm was still going on and thick drops of rain splashed on the glass.

"Sir," said Harry a little colder than before. "I want her gone. And I'm by god not the only one. I can't stand her and she hates my guts, Merlin knows why."

He felt Dumbledore's eyes on the back of his head but didn't turn. "You see Harry...", answered the headmaster, "This is one of the things I, as the headmaster, have no say in. She was sent here by the Ministry and is to stay."

Harry sighed and turned around. He looked Dumbledore in the eyes and shook his head. "I would lie if I would say I just want her gone because she annoys me," he drove a hand through his hair. "The problem is... that I can't guarantee that she'll be alive at the end of the term when she stays." This earned him a raised eyebrow. "Should I loose my temper – which I tell you I'm trying not to – then I could hurt her very badly, or even kill her."

Dumbledore's eyes took on a piercing look when he studied his face. "You would be able to do that to someone when you loose your temper on them? You would kill somebody?"

Harry didn't blink and nodded. "Yes, I could lose control like that. It... it wouldn't be the first time..."

Dumbledore looked at him sadly and sat down behind his desk. He stayed silent for a moment and Harry also sat down once more.

"So you've killed before?" asked the headmaster then, quietly.

Harry nodded. "It's something I'm not proud of, but yes, I did. Two people actually. When you leave Quirrel from my first year out of it."

He was silent for a short while and then looked at Dumbledore. "It was... five months after Draco, Fleur and I had started training. We were in Australia, not far away from the village Nick and Penny lived in, when it happened," he briefly closed his eyes to remember what exactly had happened. "We encountered some Voldemort-wannabe's, I don't know their names but they were five. All of them knew my name and of my heritage. When two of them insulted my mother over and over again... I just snapped. I don't know what I did to them, but seconds later they were dead. Killed by dark magic."

Dumbledore nodded. "It's highly possible to unleash a wave of raw magic – may it be dark or light – when you're angry. I understand those circumstances very well. But... are you certain you can't control it?"

"Positive," replied Harry.

"Then I will see what I can do, but be careful," answered the headmaster and popped another lemon drop into his mouth after having another one offered to Harry. "I'm afraid I have other matters to attend to now."

Harry nodded and went over to the door. 'I'm not really surprised... it would've been too easy to get rid of her that way,' he mused silently when he left the office.

"And Harry," he heard Dumbledore say, "If something else bothers you, don't hesitate to come to me or another Professor."

Harry said nothing and with a chuckle went down the stairs.

He strode down the corridor to meet with his friends while whistling the music of a muggle-movie he had seen when he had been travelling with Fleur and Draco. 'Oh yes... this year's really proving to be more interesting than I thought not necessary in the good way, but still...I just have to wait and see what happens...'

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"I'm bored..." complained Harry for the third time in thirty minutes and Hermione chuckled once more. "Why'd I take Ancient Runes again?"

Hermione softly shushed him with a slight jab of her wand and he playfully stuck his tongue out while Professor Babbling wasn't looking.

"And why the hell don't we have Defense today?" he asked then, "First the lessons are cancelled on Monday and now Defense is cancelled on Friday."

Hermione frowned and Harry knew that it was not because of the translation they were doing.

She looked up from her piece of paper and tilted her head. "Maybe Umbridge has a new decree and needs her time to run to Fudge?"

Harry sighed annoyed and swiftly finished his last word before putting his quill away. "It surely won't be good for her health if she does so."

With a shake of her head Hermione, too, finished her assignment and looked back up at him. "You really would hurt her? I understand that she's a..."

"I won't hurt her," stated Harry and cracked his knuckles. "I'd hex her into oblivion and then I would torture her, before transfiguring her into a frog and then I'd slowly rip-"

"I get your point!" interrupted Hermione his little speech and he smiled sheepishly. "Really now, someone would think the school should already be in ruins now, the way you're talking."

Harry chuckled and gave her a peek on the nose and took her hand. "But that's what I've got you for," he replied quietly, "You can always hold me back and I'm sure I won't be complaining. Isn't that right, honey?"

Hermione blushed and opened her mouth to say something, but they were interrupted by a slightly amused cough. Harry clicked his tongue and looked up at Professor Babbling.

"I'm happy that your relationship goes well, but would you hold your shows of affection back for outside the lessons and get back to work? Miss Granger, Mr. Potter?" the Professor asked.

Harry rubbed the back of his head while Hermione blushed a deeper shade of pink. "I'm afraid we've already finished our assignment and-" Just then the bell rang and he smiled. "- and the lesson seems to be over anyways. So..."

The Professor just raised an eyebrow in return when he handed her Hermione's and his assignment with a small bow.

He shrunk his things with a swish of his wand and gave Hermione another peek on the cheek. "The lesson's over. Affections are allowed, aren't they?"

Professor Babbling shook her head with an amused smile. "You're hopeless Mr. Potter. Just go already."

With a cheeky grin Harry took Hermione's hand and they hurried out of the classroom.

When they were in the corridor of the sixth floor Hermione softly punched his arm – a blush still on her face. "Don't do that again. It's embarrassing!"



Harry pouted and looked at the ceiling as if praying. "That's what you get for cherishing your girlfriend..."

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They arrived at the Room of Requirement – or the Phoenix Common Room (which it normally was known for) – and entered after the door had appeared.

They weren't surprised when they saw Ron, Draco and Neville already sitting there – the latter brooding over a big tome about animagus-transformations - while Draco was reading the Daily Prophet and Ron sorting through a bunch of papers.

"Hey guys," greeted Hermione and Harry nodded before flopping down on the sofa.

"So... you ready for the first meeting of our little Defense group?" asked Ron and handed Harry the papers he had been going through.

Harry looked down at the papers and realised that they were the lesson-plans they had been making over the last week. He nodded and leaned back while going through them once again.

"What I don't understand...", began Harry after five minutes, "... is why I have to teach them. Why not someone of you?"

Draco snorted. "Because you're Harry bloody Potter! The Boy-Who-Lived, Saviour of the Wizarding-World, Winner of the Triwizard-Tournament and newly installed publicity-icon of the Ministry."

Harry grimaced. "Geeze... you just ruined my evening with that, but I get your point."

Draco nodded and once more disappeared behind his newspaper, just to throw it on the desk with a groan. "Not again..."

"What is it?" wanted Harry to know and Draco just pointed at a small photo with an article under it.

\*

Sirius Black once more seen in London!

Due to a courageous photographer of the Daily Prophet the Ministry has acquired new information about Sirius Black's (mass-murderer, convicted for the deaths of thirteen muggles and the wizard Peter Pettigrew) whereabouts. The convict yesterday was seen in muggle London near the entry of the - for muggles famous - attraction 'The London Dungeons'. The Ministry guesses that due to his healthy appearance Black may be hidden by one of his former friends from school, or a clueless muggle.

We suggest extreme caution, because Black seems to be in London quite often these days and is dangerous.

If you have any information regarding the convict, please inform the Ministry immediately.

\*

Harry stared at the article with slight disbelief and then at the moving photograph. It clearly was Sirius on the photo and he was merrily smiling and waving at the camera.

"I don't care if I loose more feathers..." mumbled Harry and rose to his feet. "I'm going to Grimmauld Place."

He just wanted to change into his Phoenix form when he looked at the fireplace and nearly lost his balance.

"D'you really think it's wise just to disappear?" asked Hermione concerned. "I mean... what if he isn't even there and you get hurt while flashing? It's a big - Harry?"

Harry still hadn't changed into his Phoenix form and now lay sprawled on the carpet with his head turned to the fire. A small scowl on his face.

"Mate?", asked Ron slowly as if testing if he was still sane. "You okay? What are you doing on the floor?"

"I just saw the mutt's head in the fire." Harry explained calmly.

"He wouldn't, would he?", asked Draco and also looked at the flames. "We could be everywhere in the castle right now. And he was already seen in London. The mutt surely isn't that st- Sirius!"

"Told you so," chuckled Harry while standing up and glanced at Sirius who was grinning at him from out of the flames. "What are you doing here?"

Sirius huffed and some ashes blew over the carpet. "I just wanted to make a quick visit. Where are you guys anyways? I don't recognize the room."

"S-sir-sirius B-black!", stammered Neville after having looked up from his book and at the newspaper. He had raised his wand, but was slowly inching behind the sofa. "Wh-what is h-h-he doing h-he-here?"

Harry glanced at Neville, who was covering behind the sofa now, staring at Sirius' head in fear and then looked back to his godfather. "We're in the Room of Requirement. Also normally known as the Phoenix Common Room. It's a little complicated to explain, but somehow this room can be used for multiple things. I believe it's currently used for four different causes."

Sirius stared at him and Harry could nearly see the question-mark forming over his head.

Draco chuckled. "I think it's safe. You can step trough."

With a quick nod Sirius head disappeared and two seconds later green flames shot out of the fireplace and Sirius stepped out of the fire with a small grin on his face.

The grin however was blown away when Harry took the Daily Prophet from the table and held it under his nose.

“Um... nice photo, isn't it?” chuckled Sirius weakly.

“I'm definitely not amused,” growled Harry and threw the paper back on the table. “What the hell were you thinking?! Heck, did you even think?! What if someone had captured you?! What if someone had followed you?! Did you even think about that?!”

Sirius stared at him and then blinked. “Woah... sorry pup. I didn't know that it would cause you such a fuss.”

Ron, too, was staring at Harry with his mouth slightly agape. “Mate... I think Hermione's rubbing off on you. You sounded just like her.”

Hermione glared at the redhead while Harry sighed slightly annoyed and sat down again.

“Really Padfoot... I'm worried about you. You can't just run around while the Ministry is still after you. One day... when the rat is captured maybe... but not now,” said Harry in a much softer voice and looked at his godfather pleadingly.

“Yeah,” threw Draco in. “At least change your will before you get captured. You still must include me in it. After all I'll be the last one in the line of Black then and therefore everything should go to me.”

“Cheeky brat,” mumbled Sirius and raised his eyebrows when he saw Neville covering behind the sofa. “Um... is he okay?”

Hermione sighed and tapped Neville on the shoulder. The Hufflepuff straightened his shoulders and stood up. He was still slightly shaky when he sat down again and his eyes never left Sirius.

“You're Sirius Black,” Neville said quietly.

Sirius grinned. “I know that. And you must be Neville Longbottom. Frank's and Alice's son, aren't you?”

Neville ignored him. “And... you're here in Hogwarts. Just like that.”

Harry snorted and Sirius nodded slowly. "Yes... so what's your point?" He leaned to Harry and whispered: "Is he alright... I mean mentally?"

"Why the hell aren't you trying to kill Harry then?!" asked Neville loudly and they all broke out laughing while Sirius stared at him surprised.

"Why should I kill my... oh!" replied Sirius and looked at Harry and the others. "You didn't tell him, did you?"

Ron shook his head. "Nope. Not a single word."

"You see Neville," said Hermione gently. "Sirius is innocent. He never killed all those people and he never wanted to kill Harry."

When Harry looked at Neville he nodded and the next ten minutes they told him together why Sirius was innocent.

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"Oh... um... so you aren't on Voldemort's site then?" asked Neville after they had finished their explanation.

Sirius chuckled. "No. I'm not that cracked up." Draco snorted, but Sirius just ignored him. "My family may've been a bunch of mental idiots, but I'm not like my dear cousin Bellatrix."

Neville stiffened and then clenched his fists. "Never again mention that name in my presence! Do you understand?"

"I- oh. I'm sorry," answered Sirius slightly ashamed. "I didn't think about your parents when I said that."

Neville nodded and they all were quiet for a little while.

"So?" asked Harry then and Sirius flinched at his tone of voice. "What were you doing near the London Dungeons?"

His godfather chuckled sheepishly. "Tonks told me about it and I wanted to see if it really was as scary as she made it out to be. I was disappointed to be honest. Voldemort is way more scarier than a little fire."

Hermione clicked her tongue. "That's maybe because it was build for muggles. They have no such things as dementors and Voldemort to be scared of."

Draco stared at his cousin. "Let me get this straight. You... risked to be captured... just because you wanted to take a little ride on a horror-train?"

Sirius sighed. "I know, I know... it was a stupid idea. But I..."

Harry shook his head. "I understand that you want to be outside. Even though Grimmauld Place looks better now, it still isn't a place you want to be twenty-four-seven."

"Exactly what I mean," nodded Sirius and for the first time looked around in the Room of Requirement. "Damn!" he whistled, "This thing has a better equipment than Auror-School!"

Ron chuckled. "And believe me, Harry and Draco ensure that we get to use all of the stuff in here."

Neville smiled slightly. "At least we won't be the only ones being tortured by those two now."

Sirius perked up at this. "It reeks of rule-breaking here." He eyed his godson who smiled innocently. "Are you planning something illegal Mr. Prefect?"

Harry shook his head and pointed at Hermione. "It was her idea to begin with. But yes, we're doing something that's not necessary legal. Look."

He gave Sirius the lesson-plans and they all could see as his eyes widened with every line he read.

After he had browsed through the papers he looked at Harry and Draco in amazement. "I was always told James and I were crazy in school... but you... you must be totally mental then!"

"We do what we can," shrugged Draco and Harry nodded.

Sirius suddenly grew serious. "Are you sure you want to go through with this? I mean... learning the Dark Arts alone is illegal, even if it's for the safety of others, but teaching them to others in a Defense group... I don't know."

Harry sighed. "I know what you mean. I'm not really comfortable with it, but I see the point Hermione wanted to bring across by suggesting it. I realised after the Triwizard, that you have to fight fire with fire."

His godfather nodded and looked down at the papers before placing them back on the desk. He then looked Harry in the eyes. "I understand, but... I don't want to see my godson in Azkaban..."

Harry smiled softly. "I'll just have to follow your example then, won't I? Breaking out of Azkaban... this comes just after breaking into Gringotts on my to-do-list."

Sirius snorted. "Yeah, both those things normally are impossible. But happened all the same."

Harry stiffened when suddenly a small tingling appeared in his hand and then looked to the door. "You've gotta go Padfoot. The members of our small group are coming."

Sirius nodded and gave him a small hug. "Look after yourself pup. And don't do something I won't."

With a laugh Harry nodded. "So I can do what I want then. Bye Padfoot and... don't send me another Howler like at the beginning of the year."

Sirius took a little bit of floo-powder and grimaced. "So you send one back to me? No, thanks. Once was enough. Bye you four!" he said to the others and vanished into the flames.

Draco was already at the door. "We don't want to train them in this room here now, do we?"

Harry shook his head. "Absolutely not. A room with a forest area and training dummies is enough."

"So then, come on," said Ron and went outside.

They followed him and saw nearly all the members of their group already assembled in front of them.

"Okay..." said Harry when the door had disappeared and Draco had started pacing in front of the wall again.

They entered one after another and Harry heard the exited whispering when they saw the part with the clearing of the forbidden forest, where they had been training before.

Training dummies where positioned on the right side of the room and so were stacks of cushions on the left.

Harry slowly took stance in front of the crowd. "Well then... welcome to the first meeting of our Defense group."

There you have it. The latest Chapter of my story. To make up for the delay it's longer than the others.

I hope you liked it!

Please, give me a review! They may be able to give me a boost.

Dark Phoenix of Slytherin



CHP23